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THE

CHURCH AND HER CHILDREN.

BY

WILLIAM BARROWS, D.D.

"FEED MY LAMBS."

"Ecclesia ab Apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare." — ORIGEN.

"Hoc ecclesia semper habuit, semper tenuit; hoc a majorum fide percepit; hoc usque in finem perseveranter custodit. . . . Consuetudo matris ecclesiæ in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam speranda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda." — AUGUSTINE.

BOSTON:
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS Treatise has grown out of a necessity. In early professional life the author felt the want of such a discussion of the topic of the volume as would cover all related points, since a full discussion could alone bring a safe conclusion. Only fragments, however, of such a treatment were found, with wide omissions.

The relations of baptism to circumcision, the Christian Church as related to the Abrahamic, household baptisms in the New Testament, the constitution of the Church of God, infant baptism, infant church-membership, infant baptism in the early Christian centuries, and sundry other subdivisions, had been made the themes of isolated and valuable essays.

But these could with difficulty be found; and, when brought together, it was seen that they left wide chasms in the facts and logic and uses of the subject. This incompleteness in the presentation of the topic has been the misfortune of infant baptism in the vague notions concerning it, resulting in some unpopularity and a growing disuse of it.

In the forty brief chapters in this volume an attempt is made to remedy these difficulties. The work has three peculiarities. It distinguishes the Church of God from the so-called churches of men. It unfolds historically proselyte baptism as practised in the times of John the Baptist, showing its vital and interpreting connection with the Christian dispensation. It gives, as is believed, every passage relating to the subject in every Greek and Latin author or council between Augustine and St. John.

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The original, when extant, has been added in foot-notes, that the scholar might here find a complete hand-book of ancient authors on this subject, and an end of search, when studying the topic historically, and at a distance from libraries.

Authorities sometimes cited for infant baptism have been omitted. Among them are Clemens Romanus, Hermas, the council of Eliberis, and the Apostolic Constitutions. It has not been thought best to introduce any evidence whose authenticity or genuineness could be questioned, or that would need to be drawn out by an inference, or enforced by an argument.

This labor of leisure hours has greatly endeared the Church to the heart of the writer; and it has been only a pleasure and a joy to unfold the divine method of providing for the Children of the Church.

W. BARROWS.

READING, MASS., April, 1875.

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THE CHURCH AND HER CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH OF GOD AND OF THE BIBLE.

THE Church of God is very old. At the first, the human family was wholly on the side of God, and so no distinct organization was needed to mark his friends. But this period was one of sad brevity. In Adam all died; and the race in rebellion went out from under the divine government, so far as a disloyal purpose and overt acts could carry them. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Yet God was not wholly without friends and witnesses in any of those earlier days of the revolt. The grace implied in that first Messianic promise to our apostate parents — a promise no doubt greatly amplified and expounded and made practical at the time, and continuously afterward, by those who received it — wrought effectually in many hearts through the Holy Ghost, regenerating and producing faith in Christ and a holy walk with God. "By faith [in this promise] Abel offered unto God

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a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," having come to a good perception and acceptance of Him who in the fulness of time should bruise the serpent's head. Enoch also walked with God, and obtained honorable mention among those who were saved by faith. So was it with Noah, Abraham, and the other patriarchs. At length these friends of God came to be an organization or body, with central principles and visible outlines more or less distinct, and with a power of continuance from age to age.

For this body the Lord Jesus Christ is "Head over all things;" and he is made to show this in every age, with a distinctness greater or less, proportioned to the doctrinal understanding and to the spirituality of the body of that age. This headship pertains to him, as having the world under his charge in his labors of redemption, in the working-out of which, this body is the visible centre of labor and fruit and hope. This body constitutes the party in this world, nominal or actual, on the side of God, and in distinction from those who, as the only other party, adopt systems of pagan and false religions, or who confessedly reject the divine system without adopting any other.

This organization or body, as the loyal party for God in a revolted province, is known by various names and titles in the Old Testament, as "The congregation," "My chosen," "The children of Jacob," "The holy seed," "The people of the God of Abraham," "The assembly of the people of God," "A special people," "The generation of the righteous," "His seed."

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When we come into the New Testament, we find the same variety and definiteness of expression to point out a people specially called and devoted to God; and, as Knapp well remarks, "All the terms used to designate the Israelites as the peculiar and favorite people of God are transferred to Christians in the New Testament."[1]

It will be necessary to give but a few of these titles. "The Church:" this is the *ἐκκλησία* of the Septuagint and of the Greek New Testament, and is the rendering of the Hebrew *kah-hal*, קָהָל an assembly. So the dying Stephen speaks of "the Church in the wilderness," meaning the body of God's ancient people on the way from Egypt to Canaan. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church." "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles," &c. "And the Lord added to the Church daily." "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church." "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church." In two instances the word "synagogue" is used to express the assembly of God's people.[2]

We have also such expressions as "The kingdom of heaven," "The kingdom of God," "The body of Christ," "The temple of God," "The house of God." The phrase, "The Church of God," *ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ*, is the common rendering in the

[1] Chris. Theol. p. 470, 2d Am. ed. [2] James ii. 2. Heb. x. 25.

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New-Testament of the Old-Testament phrase, "The congregation of the Lord," קְהַל יְהוָה.[3]

All these expressions, and many more, refer to one and the same thing, — the body of the people of God and of the true religion, as distinguished from all others. The terms change with translations and languages; but the body they describe remains the same, — the confirmed and organized friends of God through the ages.

Nor can it be said that the persons so indicated are no more than the secret elect of God, scattered along the centuries, unassociated, and known only to him; for they are spoken of as an assembly, a society, having belief, experience, and ceremony, that both includes and excludes. In apostolic times they constituted a body that could be increased, persecuted, and appealed to. In the times of Christ's ministry, and before there was any "Christian" Church, they constituted a visible, judicial, and executive body: "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

There was then no "Christian" Church, but only "the Church of God," an organic, limited body, and, in the estimation of our Lord, worthy to exercise spiritual jurisdiction and discipline. They had exercised it for ages preceding, even back as far as when there was not as yet even a Jew, but only that "Church in the wilderness."

[3] Compare Ps. xxii. 22, and Heb. ii. 12, in the Hebr., Sept., and Greek.

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The covenant embracing this body had in it the plan of salvation, and the offer of it to all the families of the earth. "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."[4] Hence there was committed to the Church, in those early days, the divine records, sacraments, and a ministry, as to-day; all which must pertain to a visible organization, and not to the unknown and scattered elect; for an invisible, unknown body cannot have human offices, officers, and functions.

Very many of the prosperous and adverse events recorded in the Old Testament derive their character and importance from their connection with this organization of God's friends. The Messiah is promised to it; is represented as their unseen but coming head; and the glowing prophecies concerning his triumphs have their centre of interest in the welfare of this society.

That the members of this body and the Jews were not identical, is evident from this fact (not to mention others in advance): that some of their prophecies of Zion's enlargement by the ingathering of the Gentiles were not to be fulfilled — and, in fact, are not — till after the Jewish nation is destroyed. The continuance and enlargement of the ancient Zion runs on into a time when it is conceded that there is a Church; and then the ancient and modern interest, spiritual, so blend in names and substances and aims

[4] Gal. iii: 8.

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as to show that the two were never but one. The total similarity proves identity; and the effort to make the ancient and modern Zion two Churches ends in mere questions of development and chronology.

The phraseology of the New Testament makes it evident also that there is one broad, general Church, independent of particular times and localities, and more comprehensive than the Church at Jerusalem or Corinth or Ephesus. Saul persecuted "the Church:" the Lord added to "the Church," and set officers in "the Church." These specifications cannot apply to particular churches, but must refer to that general body of God's friends which is not confined to time and place. St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "God hath set first, apostles, secondarily, prophets," &c., and then adds, "Now ye are the body of Christ, his Church." But a body is a whole: and so that Church at Corinth could have been only a fractional part. Those appointments were for "the body of Christ, his Church." That is, aside from any local organizations, there is the one indivisible, universal Church of God, which has these officers and offices, "diversities of gifts," "differences of administrations," "healing," "miracles," "prophecy," "tongues," "apostles," "prophets," "teachers."

Of what local Church was St. Peter a member, or St. Paul? In which Church did God "set" either of them as an apostle? Not in a Church, but in "the Church." When our Saviour says, "Upon this rock I will build my Church;" when we are told that he is "Head over all things to the Church,"

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and that he "loved the Church, and gave himself for it," — we cannot think of any local Church.

So we find that the New Testament, equally with the Old, presents to us the Church of God as one, visible, and general. It is the organized body of God's friends, with whom he has deposited the divine oracles and ordinances, binding the whole together with certain truths and ceremonials. Under all dispensations, it is the central interest in that vast movement of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish the kingdom of God in this revolted world. What is so much the substance of prophecy and promise in the Old Testament and the New, and for the accomplishing of which the government is on his shoulder, has for its germ this one visible, universal Church. It is the handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, whose fruit shall shake like Lebanon. The dominion that is to extend from sea to sea is but the triumphant going-forth of him who is "Head over all things to the Church." Independent of the ages, whether patriarchal, prophetic, or apostolic, and above all dispensations, as Abrahamic, Jewish, and Christian, there is one pre-eminent, leading interest, one ever-growing organization, knowing no change, except from glory to glory. It is "the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

In such a policy and movement for reconstruction in this seceded province, it does not agree with our ideas of God, that he should pause midway, adopt a new base-line of operations, and leave the old corps in his sacramental host to a kind of disbanding. The grand army is a unit, and has but one "Captain."

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The Abrahamic and the Christian divisions are parts of one and the same body. Those ancient worthies had the same experiences, repentings, trustings, and aims that are common to us under a common Saviour. They, looking forward, saw Christ's day, and were glad, even as we, looking backward.

It is a sad thought indeed to entertain, even while rejecting it, that their Church became extinct, their plans obsolete, and the whole ancient ecclesiastical *régime* a *quasi* failure. Scripture is better than theory. God's thought is one, and his plan; — it is one Redeemer, one foundation for patriarchs and apostles, and one "Church of God." We are members of the same Church with those "of whom the world was not worthy." Their Church records are ours; and their roll of honor in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is ours, and yet open for names.

From a very early period we find the Scriptures making mention of an assembly, party, congregation, or Church, as embracing those who professed to be on the side of God. It shows itself as a visible, catholic society, receiving, preserving, and professedly following the oracles of God as a rule of religious faith and life, and as having also the ordinances of God in things sacred. This body the Old and New Testaments set forth as one and the same. As we find it in our day an ancient institution, so the apostles found it in their day. It preceded them; and they were born into its ordinances, teachings, and privileges. The writers of the New Testament speak of it as existing of old, and not originating with them or in their time, in the same way as the writers

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of our day refer to it. Opening the Bible anywhere this side the middle of its first book, we find the existence and organization of this society assumed and referred to as a great religious fact. We read on; and this fact accompanies us as a living, augmenting reality, full of vitality and hope and prophecy, even as a person. It looks down the centuries, as along the road of its anticipated journey. It walks on unwearied between the two rows of Israel's and Judah's kings, passing prophets here and there. It is the Hamlet in the sacred drama of the Old Testament. Malachi drops the curtain; and John of the wilderness lifts it again; and it is the same Hamlet in the New-Testament drama.

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CHAPTER II.

WHEN WAS THE CHURCH OF GOD ORGANIZED?

WHEN did this body receive an organic and visible form? Many interesting questions pertaining to the nature and constitution of the Church of God are involved in this inquiry. The prophets and patriarchs have membership in it, and administer to it: the house of Aaron and of Levi were set apart for it when it was "the Church in the wilderness." We go back of that coming-up of a nation out of Egypt, even to the time before the Jews had a nationality, or any man was called a Jew; and we find this society of God's friends with its outlines of faith, ordinances, and worship. We trace it distinctly to the times and to the family of Abraham. Beyond him the search is vain for any organic manifestation of it. Before his time, indeed, there is to be found scattered material for a visible organization, but only as in frontier settlements there is sometimes material for constituting a territory, before any Congressional act is passed enabling them to organize.

A constitution for the Church could, of course, be formed only by the Founder and Head, since the organization is divine. It was for him to prescribe the faith, forms of admission, ordinances, and the

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embracing border, that should characterize the union of his professed friends. As the visible organization of the Church must be of God, and cannot exist without a covenant, we must ascertain what God's covenant is, if we would organize under it. Otherwise, though we may form religious associations, we should not have a Church. Men may covenant to live and walk together for spiritual purposes; but such a body is no Church, unless God has been made a party to the organization by the adoption of his plan for the Church. Like the pattern of the tabernacle, it must come from the mount, and be faithfully followed, no one adding to it or taking from it.

It is possible that the liberty men have taken in forming local and independent "churches," so called, with human limitations and specifications, may confuse us in our attempts to discover the few and simple outlines of the original "Church of God." In the tabernacle that man has pitched, in distinction from "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched," we may possibly have been accustomed to some variations from the ten curtains of fine-twined linen, with their loops of blue, and taches of gold and of brass, and the boards of shittim-wood, with their tenons and silver sockets. We may have wrought in other beautiful fancy sketches than the appointed cherubims of cunning work.

In looking for the constitution of God's Church, somewhere between the Exodus and the Deluge, we must not expect to find for a creed basis "The Thirty-nine Articles," nor "The Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism," nor yet any well-arranged

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"Articles of Faith and Covenant," more modern and minute, with "By-Laws and Regulations" and "A List of Officers and Members." We must not presume on finding parchment rolls, and volumes of attested "Church Records," unfolding the "Doings of Council," and some quarrels and conferences, with tables of admissions, deaths, and removals, ordinations and contributions, that any scribe of the Abrahamic or Mosaic dispensation could overhaul, tabulate, and publish. Very much that pertains to the Church of man we must not expect to see when we find the Church of God.

When, where, and with whom did God first constitute a visible and ecclesiastical union of his professed friends? The New Testament points us at once to Abraham, "who is the father of us all," "the father of all them that believe."

Abraham had a piety pre-eminent for his age or for any age. Existing, yet degenerating, in his ancestry, it was revived in him; and that God might keep it pure, and constitute a fountain to gladden the nations, he isolated the family of Abraham, separating him from his country and kindred and father's house. While this separation was taking place, and before God had made any spiritual promise to Abraham, his ordinary piety showed itself with the strong characteristics of an apostolic Christian; for he builded his altars at Moreh and Beth-el and Mamre, and offered sacrifices typical of Christ. He exercised saving faith, seeing Christ's day and rejoicing in it. So he received from God justification by faith; and he was as truly established on Christ as St. Paul himself.

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Moreover, Abraham was a sheik, the head of a "house," or "family," really a tribe, and so large that on the occasion of rescuing Lot he could muster and arm "trained servants born in his house three hundred and eighteen."[1] We may well suppose that there were many in that wandering nomad village who had the same faith with their chief.[2] Three hundred and eighteen men of war from the tribe "implies a following of more than one thousand men, women, and children."[3]

So large a population under fair spiritual influences would furnish material for a strong Church, especially if it is consolidated, immigrating, and colonial, as in this case. The material was abundant and good for a religious organization and manifestation; and God used the occasion.

Perhaps some have thought lightly of the Abrahamic covenant and the institution it sealed, as if made with one man only, and personal to Abraham; but we see that he was a representative man, and the covenant is with a people rather than a person. He "pleased God;" and we are warranted in presuming that he was a religious index, as well as sheik, of the tribe, and that the body of the people went cordially into these sacred relations.

God entered into a *twofold* covenant with Abraham. Here it is pertinent to remark, that many have confounded the two parts of this covenant, and con-

[1] Gen. xiv. 14.

[2] Abram had trained them in spiritual things, in the service of God, as well as in fidelity to himself. See chap. xviii. 19, and xxiv. 12–49, and Wordsworth, in Lange, *in loco*.

[3] Murphy's Genesis.

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fused the worldly and spiritual interests in it, as if it were only one covenant made at one time. By so doing they have obscured the foundations of the Church in the foundations of a nation; and, by an anachronism of over four hundred years, they have made the Church a part of Judaism. Then, logically from these erroneous premises, they sweep away the Abrahamic Church with the Jewish civil code and Mosaic ritual, in the breaking-up of the nation. So they create a necessity for a new Church with the opening of what is only a new dispensation of the old Church, at the day of the apostolic Pentecost. Let us discriminate between the two elements, in what is called one covenant, separated in time by twenty-three years, and define each: so shall we see that one gave the Church and the other a nation to the world.

Abraham had piety, but no children. God loved him as a child, and so purposed to give him posterity and a settlement, as to a family in whom he delighted above all the families of the earth. So the Lord said to Abraham, —

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." [4]

So Abraham left Haran, and came, a childless old man and a stranger, into the land of Canaan. Then

[4] Gen. xii. 1-3.

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God appeared the second time to him, and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land."[5] After a change of residence, and a temporary flight to Egypt because of famine, and a return to Canaan, we find Abraham "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Lot, his nephew, had also "flocks and herds and tents." The business and wealth of the two being nomadic, they could not profitably dwell together. The separation was of the Lord, and placed Abraham within his own promised land. Then the Lord said to him the third time: "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever; and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."[6]

All this, the third promise of the same thing, during an interval of four or five years, is worldly, national, and temporal: it is no further connected with religion and the interests of God's spiritual kingdom than in the general verification of the principle that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is."

It is true, a rich spiritual element was infused into this divinely-constituted nation; and a kind of anticipation pervaded it of another body that God was about to form. Though the first organization under the Abrahamic covenant was worldly and temporal,

[5] Gen. xii. 7. [6] Gen. xiii. 14–17.

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it was designed to be such that men beholding it could say, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." It was a fitting preface to the great ecclesiastical work that God was about to inaugurate.

Some years afterward, Abraham being yet childless, and, as we may well suppose, thoughtful about the great promise of God, the Lord appeared to him the fourth time, and said, —

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

In this fourth interview with Abraham, God not only renewed his promise, but he sealed it with the peculiar ceremonials of a covenant. "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." In the night-watches of Abraham, between the divided bodies of the sacrifices, the covenant was sealed.[7]

"The ceremonial of the covenant of old consisted in the contracting parties passing between the dead animals, with the imprecation, that, in case of a breach in the covenant, it might be done to them as to those animals."[8]

We note here that the narrative from this point

[7] Gen. xv. [8] Lange, *in loco.*

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assumes the past tense, and declares the matter so long in question as finished. "In that same day the Lord made a covenant," a binding and solemn conclusion.[9] When, in the vision, under the "horror of great darkness," "a burning lamp passed between those pieces" of the halved victims, as a symbol of God, he ratified on his part the covenant with Abram. He then planted in promise the Jewish nation, and set the bounds of their habitation. He made the covenant to do this with a godly man, and because he was godly; but the arrangement had not a directly spiritual character and scope. It was national, civil, and geographical, yet spiritualized and interpenetrated by a religious element, as every nation should be; and the comforting addition is made to the promise, that blessings shall come on other nations through this one that God is now founding in Abram. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." As a pioneer in letters, civilization, the arts, commerce, and a pure religion, the Jewish nation proved this to be true. So the first part of the Abrahamic Covenant, so called, was framed and assented unto by a sacrificial pledge. "In that instant the covenant was solemnly completed. Its primary form of benefit is the grant of the promised land, with the extensive boundaries of Egypt and the Euphrates."[10]

We pass now to consider the second part of this covenant. From the time of the opening proposals of the first to those of the second part, is about

[9] "*My covenant* which I have already purposed and formally closed." — MURPHY, Gen. xvii. 2.

[10] Murphy, *in loco*.

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twenty-three years. After the ratification of the first part, there is an interval of about fifteen years, when God appears to Abram with new promises, and of spiritual blessings and relations. During these intervening years the piety of Abram has been successfully tested and developed in worldly prosperity; and now God is ready to take him out of the narrow circle of personal and family and mere national interests, and connect him with a scheme of universal spiritual blessing. And those who have been accustomed to regard the Jewish nation and the Church of God as beginning at the same time, having the same scope and borders, and breaking up together, as practically one and the same body, should note carefully the historical facts of this period in the documents, and their chronological order and spaces of time. It will probably appear to such, that this second part is of the nature of an appendix, a supplement, or codicil.[11]

"When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . . And thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceed-

[11] "The present form of the covenant is not identical with the former. That referred chiefly to the land, this chiefly to the sea. That dwelt much on temporal things: this rises to spiritual things." MURPHY, *in loco*.

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ing fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed."[12]

In this second part of the covenant, there is, quite naturally, an allusion to the first, and a re-affirmation of it, lest the second might seem to abrogate, supersede, or essentially qualify the first. The second part is not an added assurance of personal salvation; for that had been settled many years before, when Abram "believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." It is not an addition pertaining to the worldly settlement and prosperity of Abraham and his family and posterity; for all those

[12] Gen. xvii. 1-12.

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arrangements had been determined and concluded in the first part of the covenant, entered into when he was more than a score of years younger.

We mark the first item in the addition in the words: "I will make thee a father of many nations." St. Paul explains this as meaning that he should be "the father of all them that believe." "The promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." When any nation became a nation of believers, it would be counted as the seed of Abraham; and when many nations believed, as the English, the French, the German, the American, he would be "a father of many nations" in the spiritual sense and import of this part of the covenant. So St. Paul speaks to the Roman Christians of Abraham as "the father of us all." St. Paul had only Jewish blood, while many of those Romans had Gentile blood in their veins; and yet the apostle makes it out that they and he have one father. This shows conclusively that the paternity in the promise is spiritual, and not carnal. The "seed" of Abraham was to be believers. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

"If ye were Abraham's children," says our Saviour to those persecuting Jews. He denies that they were; thus affirming that a spiritual seed was contemplated in the Abrahamic covenant, and not a physical.

Having promised such a seed to Abraham, so spiritual and so extensive, God now promises further

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"to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." As the seed is spiritual, this promise contemplates spiritual relations and blessings. It rises above temporal favors and an earthly Canaan, to confer blessings that can be conferred and received only within the circle of faith. It extends to the children of Abraham the privileges that the believing only can inherit. This provision surpasses any thing in the first part of the covenant as much as the spiritual is more than the worldly, and the universal is more than the national.

Again: this second part of the covenant differs from and surpasses the first in a specific provision for some not of the lineal descendants of Abraham. The first gave Canaan to the natural offspring alone of the patriarch; but the second is more liberal and expansive. "He that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger, which is not thy seed." If any should choose the God and faith and society of Abraham, they could be admitted to share in their covenant mercies, be they of what nature they may. Thus early did God declare that the exclusiveness with which he was pleased to surround the Jews was national, and not spiritual; and thus early did he provide for that large inflowing of the Gentile world, of which prophecy and our own missionary days are so full. This clause is a practical denial of the theory and somewhat dominant notion that the ancient Church was Jewish. So far as the Jews made it so in their proud, exclusive, and degenerate days, they did it unconstitutionally, and by infraction of the charter. To claim, therefore, that the Old-

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Testament Church was Jewish, and so passed away with Judaism, is to ignore its divine charter, and indorse the prejudices of Jewish bigotry, by which they monopolized universal foundations to provincial purposes, and narrowed a divine doorway to the entrance of a single nationality.[18] Nothing but unbelief has ever been a proper bar to the door of God's Church.

"Not of thy seed." Note here how grace refuses limits. Temporal favors can have their bounds: "From the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates;" and they could be confined to blood relations: "Unto thy seed have I given this land." But spiritual favors can acknowledge no limits of kin or country. "Not of thy seed:" grace will have the range of the centuries, and the sweep of the earth. "Not of thy seed:" that is the clause in the divine charter of the Church, by which we Gentiles come in to be heirs with him whom St. Paul calls "the heir of the world." The first part gave us not even a house-lot in Canaan: the second, all that a child of God may have.

It remains to notice a fourth point of difference between the two parts of the covenant. Each had its own peculiar seal. The first was sealed and

[18] "The kingdom of God was not first founded by Christianity as something entirely new; but the original kingdom of God, of which the groundwork already existed, was released from its limitation to a particular people and its symbolical garb: it was transformed from being a sensuous and external economy, to one that was spiritual and internal; and, no longer national, it assumed a form that was destined to embrace the whole of mankind."—NEANDER'S *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, B. VI. c. i. § 9.

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confirmed by sacrifice, the second by circumcision. The civil and real-estate part was ratified to Abraham in that "horror of great darkness" which settled over the divided victims. For Abraham had said, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" And he said, "Take me a heifer of three years old," &c. "In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land." [14]

That sealing of the first part was never to be repeated; but the other was to be continuous: "Every man-child in your generations shall be circumcised among you." Here is a separate seal, and perpetually renewable in the successive generations of believers. The peculiarities of the rite point distinctly and singularly to the consecration of a family, a race, a posterity. There is a silent declaration in it that God would have a "seed" to serve him. So he is particular to say to his servant, that it is not simply a seal of a covenant between him and Abraham, but "between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations." And except when introduced for the first time into a family, as in the case of Abraham, the consecration is not optional with the subjects. It is an adult and not infantile, a parental and not filial obligation, to be discharged in the rite. In the apostasy, the race went out as a family, and became unclean. Under the restoring system, God would bring them back by families. When he found true faith with a proper doctrinal and experimental

[14] Gen. xv.

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basis, as in Abraham, he would require the consecration of the parent and the children. He would make the family, not the individual, the foundation of his earthly kingdom: "Thee and thy seed." The family comes in and goes out on the responsibility of adult years. The convert has come to years of discretion, and goes in voluntarily, taking with him, however, his irresponsible and unchoosing children. So he who apostatizes ejects his infant offspring from God's earthly kingdom. They have no option, and are "cut off." Thus the family in its seed and generations becomes again alien from God, as its ancestors were. This is family admission and family rejection, since the covenant specifies, "thy seed after thee." A marked feature of this second seal of the second part is the regard it compels to the posterity of the believer. While circumcision sealed Abraham's covenant with God, it sealed his seed in their generations.

This sacred sealing of men, and setting them apart from a worldly to a divinely-constituted spiritual kingdom, was never before distinctly done. It was not done at any preceding time with Abraham. Yet that God had such a kingdom in the times of the prophets and patriarchs, all confess, as also that it was a visible organization at the advent of Christ. The prophets rejoice in its prosperity, mourn over its decline, and glory in its millennial prospects. It is the spiritual centre of the Mosaic religious system, the Church in the wilderness, and the sacrificing, anti-idolatrous body in Egypt. We trace it back as a body, organic and manifest, till we come to the

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system inaugurated by this covenant, and to the society sealed by this rite; and we can trace it no farther. The New Testament, by a great variety of allusions, traces it to the same period and source. So we think that we find here the beginning of the visible Church of God.

Indeed, if a covenant ecclesiastical was not adopted at this time, and a Church-state entered into, what was the nature, design, or extent of that second part of the Abrahamic compact? It was spiritual and not temporal: its embracing line was one of faith and not of blood. Its seal was to be repeated from age to age, on successive generations, long after the promised land was inherited, and the real-estate compact executed. The limits of country assigned to those thus covenanted and sealed were not "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates," but "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Its seal was preserved, and applied to Jewish offspring and proselytes, till the coming of our Lord. It was, then, a rite of initiation to what, if not to the Church of God? But if the Church of God, then that body first took human form in the Abrahamic Covenant.

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CHAPTER III.

THE OTHER THEORY.

THERE is another and an opposing theory as to the origin and constitution of the Church of God. This theory discards substantially the Old Testament as a book of authority on this topic, and leaves us with the singular question whether the Old-Testament saints were Church-members, or could find a Church to join. We shall best state the theory in the words of an able exponent and advocate of it.[1]

He is stating the "principles held to be true and fundamental by nearly all the Baptists in our land." "One of these principles is, that the New Testament is our ultimate authority in respect to Church order and action." "We are unable to discover in them [the Old-Testament Scriptures] any proper model or account of a Christian Church." "The Jewish nation may indeed have been typical of the spiritual Israel or kingdom of Christ, just as the Jewish sacrifices were typical of Christ, the Lamb of God; but it would be as unsafe to infer the organization of a Christian Church from the national organization of the Israelites, as it would have been to infer the

[1] Close Communion. By Rev. A. Hovey, D.D., professor in Newton Theological Seminary. (Bib. Sacra, xix. 133, *et seq.*)

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manner of Christ's death from the manner of slaying a lamb by the Jewish high-priest." "Evidently, so far as the Bible is concerned, we are remitted to Christ and his apostles for light on all questions of Church order and action." "Another of these principles is, that the constitution and work of Christian Churches are definitely fixed by the New Testament." "To found the Church was the work of Christ and his inspired followers."

Speaking of the converts on the day of Pentecost, he says: "These Christians were baptized; they were under the guidance and teaching of the apostles; they met together almost daily for social worship; they provided for their poor with great liberality; and they were living in the same city. Were they not, then, to all intents and purposes, a Christian Church, — a distinct, organized, responsible body, prepared to act in concert upon all matters of discipline and common interest? If not, when did they become such a body? A community of baptized believers, under common instruction, and united in worship, — what is that but a Church of Christ?"

These quotations are a clear and ample statement of the other theory as to the origin and constitution of the Church. On such a theory and assertion of it we remark in several particulars.

a. It is a violent division of the Bible as a book of authority. We glory, as against the Papist, in the saying of Chillingworth, "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." Yet here, in set-

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tling a "fundamental principle" for one of the Christian denominations, about seven-ninths of the whole Bible is practically set aside as authority.

The question of the beginning, structure, growth, and final conquest of the Church in this world is fundamental to God's redemptive economy for man. Immediately following the need of a Redeemer, Christ was promised and manifested; and pre-eminence was given to him in this world as "the Head over all things to the Church." This headship, and to a body, he maintains conspicuously through the Old-Testament history. Why, then, should seven-ninths of the records of this "body of Christ" be challenged and set aside when we come to inquire into the constitution of the body? The Old Testament is good authority for the creed of a Church: why not for a constitution? "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." We so divide the Bible on no other question of a fundamental kind; and so doing it here puts it in the position of a slighted, overshadowed, and divided witness.

In the civic court, impeachment excludes the witness totally. His testimony may not be divided, to be accepted and rejected as may serve a purpose. The Bible is a divine unit among books, though the bookbinder put it up in two volumes, or the Bible Society issue it in twenty. If going backward one chapter from Matthew to Malachi, four hundred and fifty years, takes us outside of "ultimate authority in respect to Church order," why should not the fifteen hundred between Matthew and Moses

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affect fatally the authority of the latter on other questions? Can the centuries between the writers, or the bookbinding, rule out or grade even any of the teachings of God's one book?

b. Was there no Church till New-Testament times? So the theory assumes. "To found the Church was the work of Christ and his inspired followers." The context confines this remark to the apostolic age. This unchurches all the Old-Testament saints. They had spiritual relations to God in worship and sacrifice; but they were in no ecclesiastical state, as the Church was not then founded. But what did the martyr Stephen mean by "the Church in the wilderness" between Egypt and Canaan? What body did our Lord have in view when he said, "Tell it unto the Church?" Were not Elijah and David and Isaiah and Joseph and Mary and John the Baptist, communicants? Were they not professors of religion in such sense and relations that they would be included to-day in any proper invitation to the Lord's table? Would our notion of a Church and our Form of Admission and our By-Laws stand in the way of Abraham and Moses and Hezekiah and Malachi coming to the communion? Would our theory, if they should now re-appear, require them to "stand propounded two weeks" for admission to "our" Church?

If Samuel should come to one of these modern "Churches," with a letter from Eli declaring him to be in "good and regular standing" among God's people, would we subject him to an examination, subscription to our Confession of Faith, and a public profession of

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religion? If all those embraced in the glorious catalogue of the eleventh of Hebrews, who "obtained a good report through faith," "of whom the world was not worthy," should ask to come to our communion, would our Church theory and snug conditions compel them to a public profession of religion? As we were keeping them outside "our" Church, and away from "our" communion, debating their admission, what would Abraham and Sarah say, Moses, David, and Isaiah, of "our Church"?

These simple suggestions confront the theory that there was no Church of God till apostolic times. Of course the Church took on a Christian face in the opening of Christian times; but Abraham would recognize it as the Church as readily as we would recognize a new cast of the American dollar, with a few more stars thrown on the face of it. The Church is as clearly outlined in the Old Testament as are the doctrines of the atonement and of justification by faith. If we cannot find "our" Church there, perhaps we could find the Church of God.

c. We find in this theory the same confusing of the Church of God with the Jewish nation, that we have alluded to elsewhere as a source of many errors. "It would be as unsafe to infer the organization of a Christian Church from the national organization of the Israelites," &c. It is strange that two institutions so wide asunder in their commencement, nature, constitution, and design, should be confounded into one. The promise to found the nation and the promise to found the Church were twenty-three years apart; and the executions of the two promises

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were more than four hundred years apart, — a time sufficient, it would seem, to mark the two bodies as separate organizations. Either could expire without endangering the life of the other, as a society could be a separate body from its Church, and a Church from its society, and either die without ending the existence of the other. The Jewish nation, as a civic State, was simply a society or parish for the Church of God; and for more than four hundred years the Church lived and prospered without the parish. Indeed, the parish it was that ruined the Church, — a case not without parallel in later ecclesiastical history.

The Church was four hundred years older than the Jewish nation; yet men speak of the Church as Jewish and Mosaic, and passing away with the nation. The connection of the Church with the nation was incidental rather than organic. It was an old and independent body when the nation grew up around it and secularized it, as a worldly parish will sometimes wrap itself around a godly Church, and, by its formalisms and worldliness, press the life out of it.

So soon as the incidental and restraining connection between the Church and the nation was broken off by a Divine abandonment of the latter, and "the middle wall of partition" was broken down, the Church enlarged on every side in the full force of her Messianic spirit, and in glorious fulfilment of her evangelical prophecies. The Pentecostal ingathering of three thousand, whom the Lord added to "the Church," was but the first sheaf from the great field between which and the reapers the worldly Jewish

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nation had been so long standing. St. Peter tells the inquiring multitude that "this is that which was spoken by Joel the prophet." And to what Church were those multitudes added, if not to that ancient Church of God, of which Joel was a member, whose glory and enlargement he anticipated and predicted? The decline of the nation is the growth of the Church; and if we would understand Abraham and the New-Testament references to him and his covenant, or if we would understand God in his ecclesiastical polity in this world, we must keep a clear distinction between the founding and constitution of the Jewish nation and of the Church of God.

d. A Church on the new theory. "A community of baptized believers, under common instruction, and united in worship, — what is it but a Church of Christ?" Then, if only the mode of baptism be right, why is not the regular prayer-meeting of a community a Church? why not every Young Men's Christian Association? why not a ship's crew, where all are Christians, and maintain common worship? Changing "baptized" to "circumcised," why not every synagogue? Is this the body that Christ founded? Is this the institution of which prophets and apostles said so much, and the centuries and nations have heard so much? Is this the institution that has crowded and overthrown kingdoms, and that, like the stone cut out without hands, is to fill the earth? Is this the organization, towering above all others in this world, of whose starting and going and glorious ending the Bible is the history, — "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth?"

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Failing to recognize the grand outlines of a Divine structure in the covenant with the father of believers, and three-fourths of the Bible not being called to aid in forming a definition, we have only this for the Church of Christ: "a community of baptized believers, under common instruction, and united in worship." The definition lacks the presence and power of an entire Bible; it lacks a sweep through the centuries commensurate with saving faith and grace in Christ; and it lacks full fellowship with "the general assembly and Church of the first-born."

What, then, is the import of that covenant with Abraham, according to this opposing theory? We give the germ of an explanation: —

"The locality of Messiah is fixed in a specified family. Nineteen centuries are yet to transpire before his advent upon earth; but when he does come, it is of boundless importance that such evidence shall surround him as that it may certainly be known that he is the very Christ promised to Abraham. Faith in Christ is a primary condition of salvation; but who can believe any proposition, unless its truth is sustained by competent evidence? The measures adopted to identify Messiah when he shall appear must be such as are complete, and will secure the end promptly. This is equally as necessary for the Gentiles as for the Jews; since he is alike the Redeemer of both, and as much of the former as of the latter. To secure fully this end, God made three covenants, which may now be noticed consecutively in the order of their occurrence." "The first of these was that which secured to Abraham and his posterity,

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as a country, the land of Canaan," to keep them from mingling with other nations and so obscuring the line of descent. "A second covenant was made with Abraham, — the covenant of circumcision . . . twenty-four years after the original promise. . . . All his male offspring were then necessarily distinguished from every other people, having this covenant enstamped in their flesh in the beginning of life. Their relationship to Abraham, and therefore to the promise that Messiah should come of his family, could never be disputed. . . . The third covenant, having in view the same object with the two preceding, — the identification of Messiah, was that of Sinai. . . . In synopsis it was written upon two tables of stone, which Paul called the tables of the covenant. In its enlarged form and with its various ordinances it extends through Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. . . . All that was peculiar in these covenants consisted in their ordinances, ceremonies, and forms, all of which were, as we shall see, types of better things under the gospel. Their great moral principles were alike, and are necessarily the same under every covenant."[2]

Here are three stupendous movements: the gift of Canaan to the Hebrews and their settlement in it, the consecration of a vast nation in their generations for two thousand years by circumcision, and the giving of the Divine law as set forth in three of the largest books of the Bible. Notice the magnitude of each movement. It is more than four hundred years

[2] Christian Review [Baptist], xix. 590 *et seq.*

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after the promise of Canaan before the nation enters it. They are about five hundred years in getting full possession of it. They occupy it less than three hundred, when ten of the twelve tribes are taken into a returnless and unknown captivity. The other two tribes are saved with labor till the appearance of the Messiah. During all these twenty centuries this nation is marked, and, according to the statement, made distinguishable from all others, by a seal enstamped in the flesh of every male child. A Divine code, civil, moral, social, and religious, is given to them, so minute, profound, and universally practical, that it has both shaped and given the best elements to the legislation of all the leading nations since the days of Sinai. And, excepting the incorporation of certain principles of immutable morality in the law, these three vast works were performed of God that the world might be able to "identify Messiah when he should come."

We submit that God is wont to make a point by more direct processes. Such an array of measures to secure the attendance of witnesses savors too much of the complicated and expensive manœuvres of human tribunals. God hath not need to use so extensive and expensive a *subpœna* to secure evidence. The isolation, the marking, and the personal government of an entire nation for two thousand years, as it were putting them under bonds and keepers to appear as witnesses, at the end of that time, for "the identification of Messiah," has no congruity with God's simple and direct way of doing things. We say nothing of the exegetical difficulties of such an interpretation of the covenants.

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If, therefore, this explanation is the best that can be furnished to set aside the common views of the Abrahamic Covenant, further argument would seem needless.

Is it, then, so broad and so laborious a work to remove the ancient stones of Zion and prepare the ground for a new structure? Does it cost so much to build a denomination? And, among other documents in its corner-stone, may not all the Bible go in? And at its communion may not all sit who have seen Christ's day and rejoiced, even though some looked as far forward to it, as we look backward to it? No human theory must rob us of this joy.

We are Church-members with the patriarchs and prophets. Their Church-roll is ours, folded up in the centuries. We sit beside Isaiah at the one unchanged communion-table, and hear him say it for himself and ourselves too, "He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE ORIGINAL CREED OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

THE substance of this creed was in two particulars: the acknowledgment of God and his authority as supreme, and faith in Christ as the Messiah. With Abraham it was saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. While the compact account of the organization of the visible Church, given in the seventeenth of Genesis, does not mark the faith of Abraham so prominently as faith in Christ, the New Testament shows beyond a question that this was his faith. The Saviour says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."[1] In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said that Abraham saw the promises of Christ, and was persuaded of them, and embraced them.[2] The apostle Paul tells the Galatians that God preached the gospel unto Abraham when he said to him, "In thee shall all nations be blessed."[3] In his argument for justification by faith alone, running through the entire Epistle to the Romans, he introduces the case of Abraham as a remarkable illustration of justification and acceptance by faith in Christ. So St. Paul says that Abraham is called

[1] John viii. 56. [2] Heb. xi. 13. [3] Gal. iii. 8.

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"the father of all them that believe."[4] "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."[5] Of the Galatian Christians, and so by implication of all Christians, he says, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.[6]

Here the relationship of any Christian believer in the times of the apostles to Abraham is marked as no relationship of blood, but of faith in Christ. The headship of Abraham to those apostolical Christians had the apprehension and saving acceptance of Christ as its central idea. So strongly does St. Paul put this point, that he discards any one as a child, "Abraham's seed," even though of his loins and blood, if he had not this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."[7]

Because they believed in Christ they were Abrahamic children, even though of heathen or Gentile stock.

All which, and we leave it thus stated in summary, shows that Abraham believed in Christ, and so came to be called "the father of all them that believe." This faith, as St. Paul argues at length, was the basis of his justification, and on which, as a creed-foundation, God formed his covenant with him. So was it the creed-basis of the Church of God.

In the mind of the believer this article of faith would naturally expand and subdivide itself, showing that it presupposed and implied a consciousness of guilt, sorrow for sin, admission of the just condemnation of the law, and a humble looking unto

[4] Rom. iv. 11. [5] Gal. iii. 7. [6] Gal. iii. 29. [7] Gal. iii. 7.

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Christ for deliverance. We cannot allow for less meaning in those words, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."[8] He was one of those who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and was persuaded of them, and embraced them."

The Christian Church has no broader and no other basis than this one Abrahamic article. We have expansion and divisions of it, and varied statements, and some things added to it in our local creeds for denominational and other purposes; but, for substance of doctrine, we confess in our Church-membership to the same that the father of believers confessed to in his Church-membership.

[8] John viii. 56.

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CHAPTER V.

WHO WERE ADMITTED TO THE ORIGINAL CHURCH OF GOD?

WHEN a father who is an alien comes into the rights of citizenship, his children under age are included in the privileges and duties of that citizenship: so ordinarily, in important domestic, social, and civil compacts, the little children are reckoned with the parents. This is natural and reasonable. The constitution of the family is such that they must be reckoned as an inseparable part of it, and bound to the head in any good or ill of any parental compact. This alone satisfies the parental heart, that involuntarily binds up the child in its own expected good or ill.

Hence God in his ancient covenants invariably included the children. The children of Adam were so included, and suffer through his sin. God said to Noah, "With thee will I establish my covenant;" and so Noah, "moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." When the angels would deliver Lot they said, "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters," and "escape for thy life." So God enjoined obedience on his ancient people, "that it may be well with thee, and with thy children after

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thee." Of the children of disobedient parents he says, "In the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away." Thus has it ever been that God has regarded the household as a unit.

In view of this fact of a oneness in the family constitution, and in view of this practice of God to couple and bind up the children with the parents in any parental covenant with him, what should we expect if God should gather a Church of adult membership? Would there probably be any specific and encouraging recognition of the children of the members? On this point the history of the formation of the Church is explicit and plain. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee." "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." For God's covenant constituting the Church required that Abraham should receive "the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised."[1] So "Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised them in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him."[2] This embraced all those to whom the believing head of the family sustained the responsible relation of a father or a guardian.

So afterward, when a proselyte from the Gentiles came into the faith and Church of God's people, he "and all his" received this seal. The law regulating

[1] Rom. iv. 11. [2] Gen. xvii.

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this run thus, "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover of the Lord, let all his males be circumcised; and then let him come near and keep it. And he shall be as one that is born in the land."[8] This dedication of the household was a pre-requisite to the celebration of the passover. No one came to the communion in that ancient Church who did not at the same time publicly dedicate and make over his family to God.

The females of the household were included without any ceremonial dedication, according to that patriarchial and Oriental usage which included the females of the family, without specification, in covenants and contracts made to embrace the males. The spirit and practice of those times left woman comparatively unmentioned; yet in all civic, social, and religious combinations, and organic actions, she was most sacredly embraced and bound up by implication and silent consent.

[8] Ex. xii. 48.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE DOUBLE BASIS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

WE have now unfolded the two fundamental elements in the divine constitution of the Church of God. One is faith in the Messiah: the other is household dedication. The adult, entering into membership, must believe in a Redeemer for salvation; and if he have little children he must dedicate them to God in the Church; indeed, he is presumed to include them in and with himself, when he makes his own dedication.

In comparison with these two, all other principles were inferior. They guided to the entrance and bore up the portal to the spiritual house of God. If any one will study the formation and history of the Church through the Old Testament, he will be surprised to see how these two features mark the body in its inception and development. They lift themselves up as do the two continents of the world, what land is left being but islands. This ought not to surprise any one; since the doctrine of redemption is the natural and germinant centre of true religion, and its application most fitly begins with those nearest to us. Moreover, a due inculcation of household religion binds one over by proper influence and obligation,

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and, indeed, is a pledge that he will feel his full measure of religious duty beyond; for he who has done what he can for his family religiously has developed a spirit and activity that will inevitably lead him to do good to all men as he has opportunity. Hence we see that these two essentials to primitive Church-membership have no greater prominence in position than they have importance in substance. They have a sweep, a compass, an aggregating power. They sum up the faith and practice of a profession of religion very much as the Saviour sums up the law and the prophets in two fundamental positions.

They, therefore, who ignore the family in the structure of the Church, and so much abbreviate the original covenant as to clip off the very significant clause, "and thy seed after thee," make an organic and totally subversive change in the constitution of the body. They throw out the main element on which God depended for making his Church hereditary; and they reduce the original vow of dedication to a tithe of its divinely-measured import. The leading field of spiritual culture, the family, that was included within the divine fencings of the Church, and while within has special promises, and whose cultivation was enjoined with Divine commands, is by this human reconstruction left outside; its case is left more to human judgment and choice; and the field is worked as one from which peculiar and covenanted blessings are now discarded.

According to the original terms of admission to his Church, God made the additions by family groups. The parent and his children God reckoned as one.

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He allowed no dividing between them when the head of the group professed his faith. Not that the children would inevitably become believers savingly, or could be made such by the ceremony of admission; but in this requisition God recognized the natural and inseparable oneness of the family. So in taking the head he would not sever it from the body. He would not fracture the unit. Herein God embodies, as in all ceremonies of his appointing, a great practical truth. The analysis is this: The child, as a moral and religious being, is a growth of the household. The material, the aliment, for this growth is or may be made to be within the family. The passions, prejudices, preferences, and moral traits and religious qualities, of the family become the essentials in the moral stature and manhood of the child. So his character is or may be of home manufacture; and therefore the parents are held to be responsible for it.

During the minor years, and till this character is formed, the child has no separate life for moral growth. His life is an unsevered branch of the family tree; and over the future moral and religious character of the child the parents exercise a foreordaining power. Ordinarily this is essentially a reproduction of the character of the parents.

These are truths of Scripture, and of common observation and of common sense. Hence infidels and corrupt men, in their attempts to overthrow Christianity, usually shape their policy to break up the family as an institution of Christian society; and hence the ruin of many fair youth in good families has begun by withdrawing them from those families, and checking the force of home influences.

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Viewing the parent and child as thus naturally and inseparably connected, as to the material and growth of character, God binds over the parent as accountable for that coming character. As the germinant, forming product is under his shaping hand, and receives from him its resources for growth, God exacts from him, in the Abrahamic covenant, a pledge that the child shall be brought up for him.

It is just at this point that we may see best the natural fitness and moral beauty of household consecration. In a profession of religion, and dedication of himself to God, the man dedicates all he is and all he has to God. But nothing belongs so eminently and sacredly and exclusively and inalienably to the parent as his child. In the total dedication may he keep the child back? Yet a part of himself morally, how can he do it? In such a dedication it should be remarked, in passing, while the full thought is reserved for expansion in another place, that in the dedication the parent performs only his own duty, not the child's. The child must dedicate himself in the time and manner of God's claiming. No child's duty is performed by the parent; and no child's privilege is cut off.

How fitting, too, the public dedication and seal! His farm, shop, office, worldly goods, and powers he dedicates without specification or mark; but these are as nothing to his child. Is that immortal, bearing the image of God, worthy of no special offering? God marks it as fit for a singular consecration; and so he claims it by a particular service, dignifying the child above all the other possessions of the man.

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It is objected that there is no utility in the public pledge and offering of a child. But, while we put public officers of very ordinary grade under oath for fidelity, is there no power in the solemn covenant and oath that one will train that child for God? Shall we exact a pledge for trifles, and deny one to God, or spurn it as unworthy and useless, in a work that takes hold on eternity? Put this objection in the mouth of Abraham when he is called to dedicate Isaac: it is as good for Abraham as for one of us.

It is not till we regard thus the oneness of the family in religious sentiment and destiny, that we see the infinite reasonableness of the divine requisition for household consecration. It satisfies the parent who would bring his child into the mercy himself is sharing. It binds the parent to fidelity in duty by the tenderest and strongest bond that God can impose. By such dedication also God constitutes his Church, as he did in creation the tree yielding fruit, "whose seed was in itself after his kind; and God saw that it was good."

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CHAPTER VII.

NO SECOND CHURCH OF GOD.

AT this stage of our inquiries two exceedingly interesting questions arise, — whether God has ever framed a second Church-constitution or a second Church-creed. It will condense thought and economize time to answer these two questions at once and with one reply.

It is difficult to make some persons understand that the Abrahamic Church was any thing more than a Jewish Church. They regard it as one of the institutions of Judaism, beginning and passing away with that system. Two facts conflict with this notion. The system of Judaism had its origin in the giving of the law, moral and ceremonial, at Sinai; while the Church, according to the chronology of St. Paul, had its origin four hundred and thirty years before. "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ [in regard to Christ], the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." [1]

The constitution of the Church was, therefore, a foundation laid anterior to the foundations of the Jewish nation, and so need not, by any necessity of

[1] Gal. iii. 17.

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the case, perish with those institutions that were Jewish and national.

Moreover, the foundation for the Church was not conterminous with the foundation of the nation in its extent or duration. In the constitution of the Church God says, "A father of many nations have I made thee."[2] "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."[3] This is no national foundation, and so not Jewish. The range is wider than the Holy Land, and embraces other nations than the Jews. What is that "bringing-in" of the Gentiles, of which the prophets are so full, but a glorious addition to the Abrahamic Church? We call Isaiah the evangelical prophet, because he is so full of the spirit and spreading and triumph of Christianity. Was he so exultant over the fall and forgetfulness of the old Church of his day, and the rise of a new one eight hundred years in the future?

Addressing himself to the one Church of God, of which he was a member, he says, "Gentiles shall come to thy light. . . . All they gather themselves together: they come to thee. . . . The abundance of the sea shall be converted to thee: the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. . . . The isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish. . . . They shall build the old wastes: they shall raise up the former desolations. . . . The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory. . . . And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord."[4]

[2] Gen. xvii. 5. [3] Gen. xxii. 18. [4] Isa lx., lxi., lxii.

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So is chapter after chapter through the prophets in that glorious foreshadowing of the gospel triumph under the spiritual reign of Jesus Christ.

This is no literal regathering of the scattered Jews in the old Jerusalem. It is a spiritual gathering with the spiritual Zion, the Church of God. It is the conquest of Christianity spreading over the earth. But the address and promise are to the Church existing in the times of Isaiah; and that was the Abrahamic Church. It is her light that is to shine, her border that is to be enlarged, into her covenant and sacred enclosure that the Gentiles are to come. She is to be purified, enlarged, and to fill the earth. To use the figure of the apostle, the Abrahamic Church is the original olive-tree, and the Gentiles are to be grafts. To all of those whom the prophets foresaw as coming in, St. Paul would speak as he did to a very small part of them at Ephesus, "Remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles, were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise. Now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." [5]

Here we find that certain Gentiles were converted to God, and then came into a Church on the profession of their faith. Is it a new Church in which they take membership? There should have been one then and there, if ever; for St. Paul, who gathered and organized that body of believers at Ephesus, was a Christian minister; and those whom he received

[5] Eph. ii.

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into it were converts to Christianity. In the opening of his labors there he preached in the synagogue.[6] As a result, many of those devotees of Diana believed in Christ; and, under the directing hand of the apostle, they became the Church at Ephesus. Speaking to these Church-members afterward, he reminds them, that, as heathen, they were once aliens and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to God's covenant, but that now they are in a family, the household of God which is his Church; and, by a singular combination of terms, he goes on to say that it has the common foundation of the apostles and prophets. This foundation of his Church underlies both, and is older than both.

Here is no new body: it antedates the era of the prophets. The apostle uses here felicitous terms as if specially claiming and defending the antiquity of the visible embodiment of the friends of God. By a common process of spiritual naturalization they have obtained citizenship in this ancient confederation of God.

This Ephesian case well illustrates all the earlier Christian Church history of the apostolic times. As fast as Gentile converts were made, they were builded into the old Abrahamic structure. God did not lay any other. The original Church of God continued, as all agree, to apostolic times; and then the apostles treated the Christian converts as the ingathering of the Gentiles, that had been so fully prophesied.

[6] Acts xviii. 19.

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Those converts are taught to embrace and plead the promise made to Abraham, and are associated with him in their ground of acceptance. They are as truly made Church-members as Abraham and his seed; and St. Paul labors his argument to make it clear that they are the children of Abraham, whom God intended by the words of the covenant. Finding this body of believers constituted on the Abrahamic plan, the apostles felt no need of organizing a new body. A better creed than the Abrahamic St. Paul could not find; and indeed, in many instances he makes it the height of his argument to bring men up to the apprehension and acceptance of the faith of Abraham.

This ancient, solitary, undying Church is the body to which our Saviour refers when, speaking of an offending brother, he says, "Tell it unto the Church." St. Paul refers to the same when he says, "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets," and when he speaks of Christ as "Head over all things to the Church." This body had its organization, as a complete and already very ancient institution, in the times of our Saviour's ministry, and in the opening of apostolic labors. It existed before, during, and after Judaism. The apostles, as our Saviour, were members of it; and there is no evidence that they ever withdrew from it. When did St. John or Peter or Paul join the Church? The very question dispels a multitude of assumptions, and starts a series of questions and suggestions, showing in clearest manner the continuity of God's Church, while its manifestations and administration were changed in some respect.

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The only appearance of any thing like a new organization is found in those local bodies called Churches, as in Antioch, Corinth, and elsewhere; but there is no statement or evidence in the New Testament that these were bodies started *de novo* as ignoring the ancient Church. As well might it be claimed that the starting of a new synagogue anywhere in the Holy Land, before the Christian era, was a discarding of the Jewish system that had its centre at Jerusalem. These local Churches were but fractions or parts of the one Church. For the personal and local convenience of a number of believers, separated from their brethren, the management of their religious affairs, and the adoption and use of their means of grace were left in their own hands. They were little religious republics, within and parts of the one Church of Christ, being to that Church what towns are to a county, or counties to a State, or synagogues to the Jewish system of religious worship, whose central service and head were at Jerusalem. They were "branches" of the Abrahamic tree, Gentile "grafts" in the original "olive." Such local organizations sprung up in a very natural way, just as usage allowed the Jews to form a new synagogue in any village or corner inconveniently remote from any already established, and where ten men could be found free from daily labor for support.

Theoretically and prospectively the Church of God embraces all the human territory of this world. It is by redemption, and is to become by the conquest and settlements of grace, the territory of the Church; and Christ is head over all things in it for

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the Church. An outline government of the Church extends over it, as the constitution and government of the United States extend over our vast territory where as yet there are no local civil organizations. Where there are people enough who wish it, Congress grants to them the privilege, through an enabling act, so called, to form a State government. But that government must be in harmony with the Constitution of the United States, and only an extension and local development of the old and general government.

So a new Church at Corinth or Canton is but the development, in a new place, of the one ancient and universal Church of God. It must have more than a similarity to it. It must have the same creed basis, the same theory of membership: it must have identity with it, as a part of one divided whole. If it vary from the ancient Church enough to be a new body it is not a Church, but a human organization of the religious kind. If it exclude the ordinance of baptism, or the Lord's Supper, if it exclude females, or minors, or specified race or color or social grade, it may be in some respects a very good society, but not a Church. God only has constituted a Church; and bodies of men become parts of it by so organizing as to conform to the essential outlines that the divine Founder has drawn. [7]

[7] "The Church of Christ is his kingdom: its constitution is divine, sacred in its authority, all-wise and perfect in its plan. To alter is to injure it; but it is more: it is to slight God's wisdom, to interfere with his reign." —*American Baptist Publication Society*, Tract No. 191.

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One of the very early Church fathers, Cyprian of Carthage, speaks so distinctly on the oneness of the Church, that his words should be quoted, because, born about A.D. 200, he was near in time to the apostolic conception of the Church, and formed and expressed these views before the times when it became so much an interest for sects and theorists to discover, if possible, the foundations of a second Church of God, or make essential modifications in the foundations of the first.

"The Church is one, though she be spread abroad, and multiplies with the increase of her progeny; even as the sun has rays many, yet one light; and a tree boughs many, yet its strength is one, seated in the deep-lodged root; and as many streams flow down from one source, though a multiplicity of waters seems to be diffused from the bountifulness of the overflowing abundance, unity is preserved in the source itself. Part a ray of the sun from its orb, and its unity forbids this division of light. Break a branch from the tree: once broken it can bud no more. Cut the stream from its fountain: the remnant will be dried up. Thus the Church, flooded with the light of the Lord, puts forth her rays through the whole world with yet one light, which is spread upon all places, while its unity is not infringed. She stretches forth her branches over the universal earth in the robes of plenty, and pours abroad her beautiful and onward streams; yet is there one head, one source, one mother, abundant in the results of her fruitfulness."[8]

[8] Cyprian, Thornton's Translation. Library of the Fathers. Oxford, 1839.

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There remains to be produced an independent argument in proof of the oneness of the Abrahamic and apostolical Church.

Our Lord used the word "Church" but twice, so far as we know: "Upon this rock I will build my Church;" "if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church." Here is a reference to a body, but without any definition or explanation of it. Its origin, nature, and constitution are silently passed over. Two things only are said of the body: its creed-basis is declared to be confession of Christ; and one of its offices is disciplinary. These two things are said incidentally, more than for information as something new. The allusions of Christ to the Church are evidently to a body already existing, recognized, and well understood. No new organization, just proposed or springing up, would be so referred to. As we pass along into and through the New Testament, the word "Church" appears as naturally and freely and without definition, as the word "synagogue" or "Jericho" or "temple." No novelty, innovation, or obscurity seems to pertain to it. Both the name and the institution are evidently old and familiar to the disciples and apostles, and to their hearers, and to the readers of that day. What is the explanation? A very simple one, and for us, in unfolding this topic, full of information and suggestion.

The disciples and the apostles, and the devout of their times, had the Septuagint of the Old Testament in common use. They quoted from it generally, instead of quoting from the original Hebrew: so they had become familiar with the word *ecclesia*. The

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institution itself they were members of, and knew well; and this was the name by which they had become accustomed to call it, when they did not give it its old Hebrew name. The word came into the Septuagint, and so into common use in Judæa, before the times of our Lord, and in this way: —

When those Septuagint translators, in turning the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek about B. C. 280, sought for a Greek word equivalent to the Hebrew name of the Church, they took *ecclesia*. This is classic Greek, and at Athens or any free city of Greece designated a meeting of the voters, legally called, for the transaction of public business. Such a word was admirably adapted, they thought, to convey to their readers the idea of the Abrahamic Church, as a body composed in an orderly way, with a constitution, qualifications and processes for membership, and with legislative and executive powers. The Hebrew word for Church, *Kah-hahl*, the Septuagint translators have, though not with perfect uniformity, rendered *ecclesia*, in all about seventy times.

When, therefore, in New-Testament Greek, the word *ecclesia* was used, the mind of the speaker, hearer, or reader would revert at once to the ancient Church of God.

When our Lord used the word those two times, it was inevitable that his hearers would apply his allusion to that holy and divinely constituted body of which they were members. In view of the way by which *ecclesia* had become a well-known and well-defined word among them, any other understanding of

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the Saviour's allusion would have been impossible and absurd.

So, while the apostles, following our Lord's example, changed the name from Hebrew to Greek, from *Kah-hahl* to *ecclesia*, the thing named, the oneness of the body, remained. It passed along down the ages as unchanged as the foundation-faith on which it rested, — the Rock Christ, the same to Abraham and Isaiah and Peter and Edwards.

With that word *ecclesia* thus coming into apostolic and New-Testament use, what shadow of evidence is there that a new body was organized, crowded into notice and use, and made to assume this ancient and familiar name, and all without the least explanation of the innovation, or allusion to it, or Jewish prejudice and protest against it? Several delicate and difficult questions arose between Jewish and Gentile converts in the first Christian Churches; and the epistles show how the apostles met them. If an old Jewish Church was crowded out, and a new one brought in its place, is it not a very strange thing that no controversy between Jewish and Gentile Christians arose over the change, and left some traces of itself in the apostolic epistles? So great an innovation or revolution as the blotting-out of the Church of Abraham and Moses and David and Malachi must have produced some cases for apostolic arbitration in those early Christian *ecclesias*. Some record must have been made of so great a change. No record being found, or any allusion to it, is presumptive and almost positive evidence that there was no change to be recorded.

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CHAPTER VIII.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM SERVE THE SAME END.

THE outward or temporal manifestations of the Church have varied with the varying circumstances of God's people.

Prior to their going into Egypt it had phases unlike what it showed in Egypt, and still different in their desert wanderings toward Canaan. When it became united with the state by the laws of Sinai and the Mosaic institutes it received some modifications in its externals. So it was when Israel passed from a theocracy to be governed by kings.

When the temple was dedicated, and the temple service inaugurated, it underwent still other changes in its outward and ceremonial management. So during the captivity and after the restoration. And on the advent, crucifixion, and ascension of our Lord, many and most significant changes were wrought in it.

Still for substance the Church was the same on the day of Pentecost that it was in the days of Abraham. None of the changes in it had been radical, or affected its organic structure.

We have already noticed the fact that circumcision was the first sign and seal of admission. We pass

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now to consider the fact that circumcision and baptism have the same office and import. We will not, under this point, agitate the question whether baptism became a substitute for circumcision, or in any way took its place; nor yet the question whether baptism was applied to households by the apostles, as circumcision was in times earlier than the apostolic. We will notice simply and only the fact that circumcision and baptism served equally and the same purpose of admitting the subject of the ordinance to membership in the Church of God.

Abraham saw Christ's day, believed in Christ, was justified through that faith, made a public profession of it, and then "received the sign of circumcision" as a visible mark of the covenant between himself and God. It was a "seal," an official stamp, as on a government treaty or contract. It was the official seal of God to the agreement between him and Abraham, in which Abraham through faith in Christ had given himself away to God, and God on his part had accepted the offering, and on the ground of his faith in Christ had justified him and made him the heir of special promises. This act brought Abraham, and every other one who performed it after the manner of Abraham, into the Church of God. This was the one and only door to membership in that ancient Church; and this was the only sign and seal.

Now, let it be noted that in the times, and according to the teachings, of the apostles, the import of the covenant between God and his child was the same as in the times of Abraham: that is, on the part of man it was belief in Christ; and on the part of God

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it was justification by this belief or faith. This is one of the most obvious truths in the New Testament. When a man was ready sincerely to confess such a faith, and humbly to receive such a justification, he was ready to make a public profession of religion.

This was precisely the state of mind in which the apostles found those three thousand on the day of Pentecost. They wished publicly to own this covenant with God. They wished to add themselves to the covenant people of God. They did this. "They that gladly received his word were baptized." The covenant thus publicly made was signed and sealed by baptism. At the very point and for the very service where circumcision was formerly introduced baptism now comes in.

If any of these three thousand had, as Gentiles, thus believed in Christ in the days of Abraham or Jacob or David or Malachi, and made a public profession of religion, the sign and seal would have been circumcision: now it is baptism. Each ceremony, therefore, has the same import, and fills the same office. As an introductory rite to the Church of God, each performed the same service. The difference in the form of the rites constituted no difference in their substance and efficiency. Each did the same thing for the person receiving the rite.

We find, therefore, that the Church of God was one and the same in the times of St. Peter and of the patriarchs; that admission to it was through the confession of saving faith in Jesus Christ; that this confession by the head of the family brought the house-

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hold into membership; that circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant thus made; and that in the times of the apostles baptism was used as having the same import and performing the same service for the subject as circumcision.

At this point in our inquiries concerning the constitution of the Church of God, and admissions to it, another interesting fact arises: circumcision disappears, and baptism appears.

We first direct attention to this as a simple fact, lying up on the surface of the New Testament. Whether this came about by the command and teaching of our Lord, recorded or unrecorded; or whether apostles brought about the change by virtue of their office, and under the inspiration of God, — are separate and important points for inquiry. Now, and first, we notice the fact, obvious and undeniable, that the New Testament shows baptism at the door of the Church where the Old Testament shows circumcision. The former has not only taken the place, but is doing for the subject the work, of the other.

This change and substitution of the one for the other was not instantaneous, though it was abrupt. The apostles came into the Church by the rite of circumcision, but admitted members afterward by the rite of baptism. About twenty years appear to have been consumed in working the change.

The first admissions to the Church in connection with baptism are those mentioned as taking place on the day of Pentecost. This was A. D. 33. Nineteen years afterward, A. D. 52, a Church council is convened at Jerusalem to answer to the question, wheth-

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er the rite of circumcision should be enforced on Christians, many having neglected it altogether. The unanimous answer of the Council is that circumcision is not among the things necessary. And when this result of council was read to the Church at Antioch, which Church had called the council, they rejoiced over it.[1] After this we hear very little of circumcision as a rite of any importance, while baptism rises to the importance of an indispensable rite of admission.

During this brief period of twenty years, public opinion in the Church is wholly changed on the necessity of circumcision: the rite disappears from the necessary ordinances; and another rite of the same general import and office is introduced and made absolutely necessary.

Now, it is to be here noticed as a most significant fact, that these changes — the disuse of circumcision, and the introduction of baptism — took place when the Church was under the personal management of the apostles themselves. They saw what was taking place: they assented to it, advised it, defended it, and practised it. They were the immediate pupils of Christ. They were inspired men; and they gave doctrines and customs, laws and ordinances, to the Church with unquestioned authority. As acting for the Head of the Church, and under his plenary control, in every official act, they debated and decided in council, they organized local Churches, and administered Church government. Therefore what they

[1] Acts xv.

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said and what they did becomes to us an "infallible rule of faith and practice."

But it is objected that there is no command in the Bible to substitute baptism for circumcision.

In considering this objection, let us narrow it to the one simple and naked point of difficulty raised by it, — by excluding all idea of the household, as included or not, in circumcision and baptism, — and state the objection thus: —

"Baptism cannot be said to take the place of circumcision in the adult believer's profession of religion, because there is no express command in Scripture for this change."

It has been shown, and is generally admitted, that in an adult admission to the Church the two rites are equivalent. They have one and the same general aim, and answer one and the same general end. This being assumed, we reply to the objection: —

1. Many of the instructions and commands of Christ to his disciples were never put on record. "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."[2] In these unrecorded teachings of our Lord we have a right to suppose that many principles and practices were inculcated of which we are left in ignorance till we discover them taught and illustrated in the lives of the apostles. Having taught the apostles so far as he desired, and being about to leave them, he gave to them authority to act in his name, assuring them that the Spirit

[2] John xxi. 25.

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should bring all things to their remembrance. To this must be added the special grace of inspiration, to guide them perfectly in all official teachings and practices. In these facts is found the reason why all denominations of Christians receive without questioning so many truths and usages, set forth in The Acts and Epistles, that are without the warrant of any special command. We receive them on the authority of the apostles, as commissioned of Christ and inspired of God. As a single illustration, take the government of the Church. It was managed very differently after Christ from what it was before Christ. We derive our policy of Church government from usage set forth in the book of The Acts and in the Epistles, which usage was introduced or sanctioned by the apostles. But where is their special warrant and command to work these changes and introduce these practices? Hence the first reply to the objection: it is not necessary to find an express command in the record of Scripture to substitute baptism for circumcision in order to declare that the change was made. This and this only it is enough for us to know: that the apostles acted under the authority of Christ; and that inspiration guided them in all the official uses of that authority.

2. The practice of an apostle in the matter in question is as authoritative as the command of Christ. Virtually it is nothing else. Under his commission and the personal, plenary supervision of his inspiration, what is the practice of the apostle in official duty but an exponent, a reduction to use, of the teachings of Christ?

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If this be denied, then the New Testament, as a rule of faith and practice, must be sadly abbreviated. We put each writer under a special suspicion; we put him on a moral quarantine, to prove his veracity and authority, — by demanding an express command from the Master for each of his teachings and usages in the Church. To this absurdity does the objection bring us.

But the apostles did practise baptism in the place of circumcision. They used it in the same place, — at the door of the Church, as of the same import, and for the same end. The one disappeared; and the other appeared as the introductory rite to the Church under their management, and with both their defence in council, and their sanction in practice. This is equivalent to a "Thus saith the Lord." Therefore we conclude that in apostolic times baptism became a substitute for circumcision in the admission of adults to Church membership.

In the prosecution of our inquiries we shall find it necessary, as the next step, to ascertain, if possible, when, how, and by whom this change in the initiatory rite was made.

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CHAPTER IX

A REFORMER IN JUDÆA.

HOW sudden and how strange his first appearing! He never had sat in the councils of the sanhedrim, or made himself of note in the synagogues. He was not ushered into fame as the favorite pupil of some Rabbi, or the heir of a far-sounding family name.

He came without pedigree or trumpet, even as true greatness is wont to come. So sudden in his coming, as being in the manhood of his powers and of his theme, he seemed as one sent of God. His appearance was strange even for that generation. A coarse mantle of camel's hair was his robe, fast about him with a plain leathern girdle; and his food was the spontaneous offering of the desert. Nor was all this affected and grotesque, as the trick of an obscure man to catch the gaze of a crowd. It was as the reappearance from the tomb of one of the old prophets. It was the manner as well as the spirit and power of Elias. As when we, by sudden discovery, bring forth a painting of one of the old masters, glorious in the costume and colorings of an elder and better day, so he stood among the wondering multitude.

But the strangeness of the man and of his manner is

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forgotten in the welcome wonder of his mission. For all "the people were in expectation; and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not."[1] The times were full of this expectation of the Messiah. Men were studying promise and prophecy. They watched, and they waited. And when the prophecy of Isaiah was answered in "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,"[2] the multitude flocked to the mysterious preacher, as the harbinger of the Long-Expected. They were eager to believe his word that The Christ was at the door. They could take declaration for proof; they could leap all argument: so earnest were they to receive God's promised and anointed, the King of the Jews. National pride and ambition, personal gain and worldly glory, had sadly changed, in their views and expectations, the character, person, purpose, and work of the coming Messiah; but their delusions only deepened their delirium of joy, when, thronging the Baptist, they heard from his lips that the Christ was at hand. And, if they could but receive the Messiah of their expectation, what preparation were they not willing to make! A people always so ready to be carried away by any great religious truth, they heard with gladness that a new dispensation in the Church of God was about to be ushered in.

When, therefore, the forerunner of our Lord preached to them repentance for sin and unbelief, and urged on them a cordial acceptance of their coming

[1] Luke iii. 15. [2] Matt. iii. 3.

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Lord, they were eager to seal their promises of reform, and bind themselves over in advance to be obedient subjects in "the kingdom of heaven," now at hand in a new manifestation. So there "went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."[8] So general was this expectation of the Messiah, and so ready were they to prepare the way of the Lord, that this baptism was almost as the baptism of the populace, so extensive was it.

The import of the rite is obvious. It was performed on a circumcised people, the chosen of God. They had broad notions of discrimination between the clean and the unclean. When Aaron and his sons were consecrated for the priesthood, they were washed and made clean; and when Israel was about to receive the dispensation of Moses and of Sinai, they were required first to wash and be clean. Baptism has the import of purification and dedication; and so now, when "Jerusalem and all Judæa" are about to receive the Christian dispensation, this rite is administered to them as purifying and preparatory and dedicatory. Indeed, we find that their High Priest himself is inaugurated by the same rite of consecration: so it became him to fulfil all righteousness; and so, "when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized."

This, then, was not Christian baptism: that was first administered a few years afterward to those three

[8] Matt. iii. 5, 6.

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thousand Christian converts on the day of Pentecost. It was not a baptism representative of "the washing of regeneration;" for some of the subjects of it thirty years afterward had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost;" [4] and then the Master himself received it, in whom it could represent no such regenerating work.

It was administered to Church-members. It was a ceremonial purification and introduction of the Church to a higher and holier dispensation. The baptism of John was a formal purification of the people, preparatory to the inauguration of Christianity. He "called upon his countrymen to prepare themselves — by repentance for sin, and reception of baptism as a symbol of a changed mood — to enter into the Messianic kingdom, now on the point of being established." [5]

"An opinion, it appears, prevailed among the Jews, that Elias, whose coming was to precede that of the Messiah, as also the Messiah himself, would initiate their disciples by a sacred ablution; and it was therefore necessary, in order to avoid giving the Jews any pretext for doubt respecting either Christ's authority or functions, that both John and himself should accommodate themselves to this popular persuasion." [6]

[4] Acts xix. 2.
[5] Guericke's Ch. Hist., Shedd's ed., p. 36.
[6] Mosheim's Commentaries, Murdock's ed., i. 89.

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CHAPTER X.

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN NO NOVELTY.

THE baptism of John does not seem to have created, as a ceremony, any interest, as if it were a strange custom in Judæa, introduced by John himself. Indeed, in all the hostility to John and his work, there is no accusation that he had assumed to create another sacred ceremonial; and in all the hostility of the Jews to the Christians, for their innovations in religious teachings and rites, it is nowhere implied that the Jews regarded baptism as a new ceremony, springing up with this new sect.

We enter, therefore, in this chapter, into an inquiry concerning Jewish baptisms before the times of John the Baptist.

The Jewish systems of religious and social life abounded with ceremonial washings and purifications. These are called in the New Testament "baptisms."[1] Their use was frequent and varied, as the Old Testament abundantly shows. Any commentary on the passages cited in Mark and Hebrews will make this plain.[2]

[1] Mark vii. 4, Βαπτίσμους. Heb. vi. 2, Βαπτισμῶν; διαφόροις Βαπτισμοῖς, ix. 10.

[2] The Hebrew Old Testament uses these words mainly to express these baptisms: צָבַע Dan. iv. 22. טָבַל 2 Kings v. 14. Josh. iii. 15.

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There is also a class of passages where the same act is expressed by a circumlocution, as in Lev. xi. 32, "It must be put into water."

But the different persons, things, and modes of the Jewish baptisms are not so fully obvious on the face of the Hebrew text, and in its single words.

The Greek translation in the Septuagint casts much light on the line of our present investigation. Indeed, one is at first surprised to see how much baptism the Seventy find in the Hebrew Scriptures.

This Greek version of the Old Testament began to be made at Alexandria about 280 B.C., and was perhaps a century in its progress to completion. That tradition of its origin, starting with Irenæus, may have some historical element in it; but the body of it is evidently of the fabulous and marvellous. He says that Ptolemy Lagi wished to adorn his Alexandrian library with a Greek copy of the Old Testament, and so asked the favor of a translation of it from the Jews of Jerusalem. They sent to the king seventy of their learned elders, who, each in a separate cell, produced one and the same version, each being identical with every other, word for word.

In the absence of all historic data as to the origin of the Septuagint, probabilities must serve us, if we say any thing.

When the Jews returned from the Captivity, the Hebrew was almost an unknown tongue to the most of them, born and educated as they had been among

Ruth ii. 14. 1 Sam. xiv. 27. 2 Kings viii. 15. Job ix. 31. Ezek. xxiii. 15. Lev. iv. 6; *et al.* מָחַץ Ps. lxviii. 24. טָבַע Ps. ix. 16; lxix. 3, 15. Jer. xxxviii. 6. Lam. ii. ix.

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the Chaldeans. When, therefore, the Scriptures were read in the synagogues in Palestine, they were rendered and explained in Chaldean. So the Jews at Alexandria, settling there soon after the conquests of Alexander, must have lost their knowledge of the Hebrew, and made Greek their vernacular. Their synagogue readings and expoundings would, then, naturally come through the Greek; and so a Greek version of the Old Testament would be begun, ending, in a century or so, in an entire translation. The necessities of the case, therefore, in the natural production of a Greek translation, as well as any business request of Ptolemy, must be reckoned in among the producing causes of the Septuagint.

Long before the coming of Christ this translation had become widely known, and much esteemed and used. It followed the conquests of Alexander and the Grecian colonies, and thus did much to prepare the Gentiles for the reception of Christianity.

"Many of those Jews who were assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, from Asia Minor, from Africa, from Crete and Rome, used the Greek language; the testimonies to Christ from the Law and the Prophets came to them in the words of the Septuagint; St. Stephen probably quoted from it in his address to the Jews; the Ethiopian eunuch was reading the Septuagint version of Isaiah in his chariot. They who were scattered abroad went forth into many lands speaking of Christ in Greek, and pointing to the things written of him in the Greek version of Moses and the Prophets. From Antioch and Alexandria in the East, to Rome and Massilia in the

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West, the voice of the gospel sounded forth in Greek."[3]

Of the three hundred and fifty quotations from the Old Testament into the New, all but about fifty appear to have been made from the Septuagint. Of course it must have had a great influence in the Holy Land at the coming of Christ in shaping the religious opinions, expectations, and observances of the people.

Yet this translation abounds with the "baptisms" of St. Mark, and with the "divers washings" (baptisms) of St. Paul. Naaman "went down and dipped himself (*ἐβαπτίσατο*) seven times in Jordan."[4] Isaiah is made to say, "My heart wanders: iniquity baptizes me"[5] (*ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει*). Judith, just before she beheaded Holofernes, "abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself in a fountain of water by the camp"[6] (*ἐβαπτίζετο ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος*). The son of Sirach, in one of his proverbs, gives still further illustration on our inquiry. "He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?"[7]

Additional to these cases of the use of *βαπτίζω*, there are about twenty passages where the Septuagint translators have used the word *βάπτω*. The friends of the immersion theory of baptism have claimed that these two words are substantially one,

[3] Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Septuagint.
[4] 2 Kings v. 14. [5] Isa. xxi. 4. [6] Judith xii. 7.
[7] Ecclus. xxxiv. 30. *Βαπτιζόμενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ καὶ πάλιν ἁπτόμενος αὐτοῦ, τί ὠφέλησεν τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ;*

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as a measure or equivalent each of the other. Dr. Carson approbates Dr. Gale's position, "That the one is more or less than the other, as to mode or frequency, is a perfectly groundless conceit."[8] "The two words are nearly or quite synonymous," is the position of Prof. Dagg in his "Church Order."[9]

For the general purposes of this chapter it is not necessary to affirm or deny the correctness, nice and absolute, of these opinions. The Hebrew language, as an early and simple tongue, was not affluent in words of terminology for careful and speculative distinctions; and therefore the four words above cited are used more or less as interchangeable equivalents in Hebrew. A linguist, in denominational controversy, marks Grecian shades of distinction between *βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω*; and, running back, he may find corresponding Hebrew shades between טָבַל and צָבַע: but it is very doubtful whether Moses, David, and Isaiah would recognize and observe the distinctions in their own writings. Indeed, it might trouble the translators of Ptolemy Lagi to mark the more delicate lines of meaning that led them in several cases to use one of these Greek words rather than the other. This thought is worth our delay on it.

Our translation says of Naaman that he "dipped himself seven times in Jordan." The Septuagint says "he baptized himself" (*ἐβαπτίσατο*)[10] Yet where in the Levitical law it is said of any article that an unclean animal has touched, "it must be put into water," the Septuagint says *εἰς ὕδωρ βαφήσεται*.[11]

[8] Bapt. Board Pub., 1853. [9] South. Bapt. Pub., 1859.
[10] 2 Kings v. 14. [11] Lev. xi. 32.

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In Joshua we read that "the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water;" which the Septuagint renders *ἐβάφησαν*.[12] In the account we have of the murder of Benhadad, it is said that Hazael "took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died." The Seventy state it thus: *ἔλαβε τὸ μαχβὰρ καὶ ἔβαψεν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι*.[13] In the account of these four acts there is such a similarity of mode, that it is difficult to tell how the meaning could require two words to express it. The dipping of Naaman, and of the unclean thing, and of the feet of the priests, and of Hazael's thick cloth, are acts quite alike, so far as the subjects of the dipping are concerned. Would not either *βάπτω* or *βαπτίζω* equally well express each act?

It is not needful to extend criticism over each use of the two words by the Greek translators of the Hebrew Scriptures. Full references are appended for those who would examine every case.[14] These references are enough to show that the Seventy found much of baptism in the Hebrew Old Testament; and they constitute good foundation for St. Mark to speak of "baptisms," and for St. Paul to speak of "divers baptisms." They were many and varied.

When, therefore, John came baptizing, there was no need that the act should excite surprise, or

[12] Josh. iii. 15. [13] 2 Kings viii. 15.

[14] Βαπτίζω: Isa. xxi. 4. 2 Kings v. 14. Judith xii. 7. Ecclus. xxxiv. 27. Βάπτω: Ex. xii. 22. Lev. xi. 32; iv. 6, 17; ix. 9; xiv. 6, 16, 51. Num. xix. 18. Deut. xxxiii. 24. Josh. iii. 15. Ruth ii. 14. 1 Sam. xiv. 27. 2 Kings viii. 15. Job ix. 31. Ps. lxviii. 23 (Sept. lxvii. 24). Dan. iv. 33; v. 21.

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create remark. It had no novelty to a Jew: it was no innovation. The Jews in the times of John the Baptist were familiar with it.

Their use of it, moreover, was evidently broader than the Septuagint use of the specific terms for it. They saw baptisms in acts where neither Hebrew nor Greek writer expressed it in the technical words. Their understanding of the Old Testament, and of the customs of the Hebrew fathers, led them to see baptisms where no lexicon indicates them.

How else can we accept the statement of St. Paul? — "I would not that ye should be ignorant, brethren, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."[15]

But the Hebrew record of that miraculous deliverance of Israel makes no mention of a baptism: the Grecian Seventy find no suggestions of a baptism. What warrant has the apostle to use the word? Whence has he any intimation that there was a baptism in the transaction at the Red Sea?

St. Paul is not making a quotation, statement, or translation of an historic fact. He is expounding, interpreting, a fact. He is stating results, not the physical modes. Moses describes the modes, the result of which, the apostle says, was the baptism of all Israel unto Moses. The miracle of their deliverance by means of the divided sea had begotten in them a faith, a confidence, in Moses, as a leader appointed of God and every way to be trusted. It

[15] Καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσαντο ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θάλασσῃ. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

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had brought them under the influence and control of Moses: it had made them over to him as willing and trusting followers. As an unorganized, emigrant multitude, distrustful of him, and in a terrible emergency between the pursuing Egyptians and the sea, God interposed marvellously. The interposition was a divine indorsement of Moses, and all Israel saw it. So by this passage of the sea they put themselves under him, gave themselves up to him, to be led and ruled and converted into a nation. The miracle wrought out their faith in Moses; and the result of this faith, the coming under the controlling influence of Moses, the apostle calls being "baptized unto Moses." The baptism is a resultant influence. It comes on all Israel after the passage of the sea, and as an effect of the passage. They were baptized into Moses by the passage.[16]

This case is an instructive one: it is a key to a storehouse of thoughts on Jewish baptisms. It shows us how St. Paul's Hebrew mind and studies had led him to see baptisms where there were no modes or technical statements of them. It shows us, too, how the scholarly among his own people and the Gentiles, in the first and early centuries of Christianity, were able to find so many baptisms in the Old Testament, of which Hebrew authors and Greek translators make no mention. Calling attention to a few of these will illustrate the familiarity of the Jewish mind

[16] Has the water in this case any thing to do with the "baptism"? If God had as miraculously delivered Israel by opening some defile through a mountain and leading them to safety, would they not just as fully have been "all baptized unto Moses"?

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with baptism in the days of John, and so show still further why his baptism of the populace at Jordan did not excite the interest of a novelty, or the opposition of an innovation.

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CHAPTER XI.

JEWISH BAPTISMS.

WE enter now into an historical inquiry as to the use the Jews made of baptism before the times of John the Baptist.

The entire fact may be stated in a paragraph. The Jews were much inclined to make converts from among the Gentiles. So great was their zeal in this, that our Saviour charged them that they would "compass sea and land to make one." When one was gained over to the Jewish system, he came fully into the privileges and obligations of a Jew by three ceremonies, — circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. Hence as proselyting was common, so was baptism, among the Jews in the times of John the Baptist; and so the rite, as administered by him, did not create any interest as a novelty or innovation.

Having stated it for substance, let us now unfold this historical fact more particularly, that we may feel more fully its just bearings on our general subject.

It may be best to mention first the authorities used. The first and main one is the Talmuds. These are a compend of Jewish writings. The Jews hold, that, when God gave a written law to

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Moses, he also gave him an oral law, to be preserved and passed down from age to age by tradition. After the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, A.D. 70, they were afraid of losing this oral law, and so took measures to have it committed to writing. This was accomplished between A.D. 190 and A.D. 220, a date near enough to the times of our Saviour to allow for a correct record concerning their religious ceremonies. Prideaux says they were written out within one hundred years of John the Baptist. During the century following, the Jewish Rabbies in Palestine wrote out extensive commentaries on this traditional law. These commentaries, with the oral law, constitute what is called the Jerusalem Talmud. Before A.D. 500 the Rabbies among the Babylonian Jews also prepared a commentary on this same traditional law. This, with the oral law, composes what is known as the Babylonian Talmud. These Talmuds, it will be seen, must be of the highest authority on Jewish doctrine and usage. The oral law, which in them is reduced to writing, they were accustomed to place even above the recorded law of God as set forth in the Pentateuch. And so Christ said to the Jews, "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

There was a Jewish sect in the times of our Lord, called the Hemerobaptists. In his book on "The Heresies," Epiphanius (born A.D. 310, archbishop in Cyprus) mentions this order, as accustomed to the daily ablution of the entire body as indispensable to salvation. Hegesippus, a writer in the middle of the

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second century, mentions this same sect as quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, refers to them, but calls them simply "Baptists." In the Indiculum Hæreseon, a little work commonly attributed to Jerome, they are also mentioned.

This naked reference is made to these Everyday Baptists, and to the early authors who speak of them, simply to show that in the times of our Lord baptism was so common among the Jews that a fanatical denomination had become established on the theory that its daily observance was necessary to salvation.

Another principal authority is Maimonides. He was a most learned Rabbi, who flourished about A.D. 1150. "The Jews are unable to set bounds to the veneration in which this learned man is held." They call him "The Eagle of the Doctors," "The Glory of the East," "The Light of the West."[1] Of course his historical statements concerning the usages of his people must command a place of the first importance.

Among English authorities, Dr. Lightfoot holds a pre-eminent place.[2] He made himself very familiar with all these writings of the Jews to which we have referred, and is more used than any other English author, as both most learned and reliable. On the subject in hand he says,—

[1] Berk's History of the Jews, p. 179.

[2] See, for general reference, London ed. folio, two vols., 1684; Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on St. Matthew iii. 5, vol. ii. 116-22; A Sermon preached before the Natives of Staffordshire, 1658, ii. 1040, *et seq.*; a Sermon preached at Aspeden, 1660, ii. 1132, *et seq.*; also, i. 208-10, 525-7.

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"The first use of baptism was not exhibited at that time [of John the Baptist]; for baptism very many centuries of years backwards had been both known and received in most frequent use among the Jews, and for the very same end, as it now obtains among Christians, namely, that by it proselytes might be admitted into the Church; and hence it was called baptism for proselytism;"[3] and he refers to the Babylonian Talmud for his authority.

He adds that it was an axiom among the Jews, "No man is a proselyte until he be circumcised and baptized;"[4] and so he says, "You see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes.[5] And Maimonides says the same: "In all ages, when an ethnic is willing to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised and baptized, and bring a sacrifice, or, if it be a woman, be baptized, and bring a sacrifice."[6]

By this last remark of Maimonides it will be noticed that female converts to Judaism received the ordinance of baptism. The authorities are full on this point. This is a very important historical fact to be borne in mind, while meeting the objection, that if baptism is made to take the place of circumcision, only males could be baptized.

The Talmud says, "We find, concerning the maid-servants who were baptized but not circumcised,"

[3] Lightfoot's Works, London, 1684, vol. ii. 117.
[4] Ibidem. [5] Do. p. 118.
[6] Wall's Hist. Infant Bap., Cotton's ed., Ox. 1844, vol. i. 5.

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that they are proselytes. "One baptizeth a heathen woman in the name of a woman: we can assert that for a deed rightly done."[7] And again: "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised; and then . . . they baptize him in the presence of two wise men, saying, Behold, he is an Israelite in all things; or, if it be a woman, the women lead her to the waters," &c.[8]

And, what should be more carefully noted as bearing peculiarly on our inquiry, if the parents were baptized, the young children were included as a matter of course. The law of baptism held all who were held by the law of circumcision, and went beyond, including females. From the abundance of testimony to this point, an item or two must suffice.

Says Lightfoot: "For so was the Custom of the Jewish Nation in their use of Baptism, when a Proselyte came in, his children were baptized with him: and all this upon this ground, that all that were related to the parent might come into Covenant."[9]

And to the same effect he quotes the Babylonian Talmud and Commentary thus: "They baptize a little Proselyte according to the judgment of the Sanhedrim. If he be deprived of his father, and his mother bring him to be made a Proselyte, they baptize him, because none becomes a Proselyte without Circumcision and Baptism, according to the judgment of the Sanhedrim, that is, that three men be present at the Baptism, who are now instead of a father to him."[10]

[7] Lightfoot ii. 117–18. [8] Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap., i. 7.
[9] Works, vol. ii. 1128. [10] Do. 118.

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As to the age under which a child may be the proper subject of infant baptism, they had this rule: —

"Any male child of a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day, and females that were under twelve years and a day, they baptized as infants, at the request and by the assent of the father, or the authority of the court, because such an one was not yet the son of assent, as they phrase it, i.e., not capable to give assent for himself; but the thing is for his good. If they were above that age they consented for themselves." [11]

And this usage of infant baptism among the Jews is farther illustrated by one of those mercies that cropped out over the barbaric roughnesses of their times. The practice of the heathen to expose their infants to death is well known; and such were often found by the Jews, and adopted into their families either as children or servants; and they did the same often, with infants that came into their hands by victory on the battle-field. For the treatment of these the Jerusalem Talmud thus prescribes: —

"Behold, one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant. Do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant. But, if he baptize him in the name of a freeman, do thou also circumcise him in the name of a freeman." [12]

And the statement of Maimonides is to the same purpose: "An Israelite that takes a little heathen

[11] Wall i. 17. [12] Ibid i. 20.

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child, or that finds an heathen infant, and baptizes him for a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte." [13]

These are but a few of the very many specific and direct declarations of the practice of baptism by the Jews in the times of John the Baptist. It is not needful to multiply these quotations. But there are certain incidentals or wayside items, that have a peculiar force in illustrating Jewish baptisms.

Maimonides says that when any offered themselves as proselytes for baptism, "they make diligent inquiry concerning such, lest they come to get themselves under the law for some riches that they should receive, or for dignity that they should obtain, or for fear. If it be a man, they inquire whether he have not set his affections on some Jewish woman; or a woman, her affection on some young man of Israel." Maimonides makes mention also of many minute circumstances that must attend the ceremony of baptism. It must not be on the Sabbath, nor on any holy day, nor by night. There must be three witnesses of the ceremony. Circumcision must precede it, and a bloody offering accompany it; yet, in times of revolution or dispersion, the sacrifice may be omitted. The sacrifice must be a burnt-offering of a beast, or of two turtle-doves, or of two young pigeons. It was also a rite never to be repeated on the same person. Nor were the children born to proselyte parents after their baptism to be baptized; for baptism by the Jew was regarded as a purification of the race or family stock. The parents once purified,

[13] Wall i. 20.

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all their unborn posterity were made pure up to parental apostacy.

Here is the fittest place to mark the sharp distinction that the Jews made between baptism and circumcision in their uses. Baptism constituted one a Jew, while circumcision constituted him a Church-member.[14]

The side-allusions to this usage, scattered through the best Jewish authorities, show baptism to have been as surely an ordinance among them as circumcision or sacrifice. And now we see the reason for these strong and confident declarations of Dr. Lightfoot, a man so scholarly in the writings of the Jews concerning their doctrines and antiquities. "Baptism was well enough known to the Jews; and both John and Jesus Christ took it up as they found it." "Christ took up baptism as he found it in the Jewish Church; and they baptized infants as well as grown persons." "Think not that baptism was never used till John Baptist came and baptized. It was used in the Church of the Jews many generations before he was born." "Baptism of men, women, and children, was no new thing among them, when John Baptist came baptizing, but a thing as well known as with us now." "Christ took baptism into his hands and into evangelical use, as he found it, this only added, — that he might promote it to a worthier end and to a larger use. The whole nation knew well enough that little children used to be baptized. . . . Nor do I believe this People that flocked to John's Baptism

[14] Wall i. 5-45.

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were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the Nation, that they brought not their little children also with them to be baptized." "We suppose, therefore, that men, women, and children came to John's baptism, according to the manner of the Nation in the reception of Proselytes."[15]

When baptism was introduced among the Jews is not definitely known. Its origin among them is of very great antiquity, as we are informed by Jost.[16] The Septuagint says that Naaman was baptized (ἐβαπτίσατο) in the Jordan for the curing of his leprosy, and that unrighteousness baptized Isaiah (ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει).[17] There are about twenty cases in the Septuagint where the Greek for "baptism" is used as in the New Testament. Now, if Alexandrian Greek, B.C. 280, could properly describe acts as baptisms that took place among the Jews seven hundred and nine hundred years before the Christian era, we can easily presume that baptism was a rite of very great antiquity among them. One thing is evident: in the times of our Lord the rite was national among them. So Jost says, "Jesus also, honoring the na-

[15] Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii., pp. 1129, 1133, 1040, 119, 122. See also Mosheim's Hist. Com., vol. i. 89, Murdock's translation. "No special historical incident is necessary to account for the origin of John's baptism. Since lustrations were common in the Jewish worship, it would readily occur to him to represent, by a symbolical rite, the repentance which he preached. True, this was not done by his own arbitrary will: the Divine Spirit," &c. Olshausen's Com., Matt. iii. 1.

[16] Jost, "a learned Jewish Rabbi, who has devoted his life to the investigation of such subjects, and who is considered by intelligent Jews as the most profound historian of the age." — Rev. JAMES MURDOCK, D.D., *Bib. Repos* xiv. 174.

[17] Isa. xxi. 4.

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tional custom, received consecration from him" (John the Baptist).[18]

In these historical inquiries into the baptism of John, we find several important facts.

Baptism, as a religious ceremony, was in common use among the Jews in the time of John the Baptist. Why introduced among the Jews, and how long before, and by what authority, are questions not pertinent to the unfolding of our one topic.[19] It is enough here to know the fact that baptism was in general practice among the Jews before and during the time of John. It was used as an introductory rite to a new religion. The Jews esteemed the pagan Gentiles as an unclean people; yet they were constantly drawing converts from them. When one came over to Judaism, he received the baptismal cleansing. The act made him a Jew. It initiated him into a new religion. It did not admit him to Church-membership: this was the office of circumcision. When

[18] "Falluntur qui ejus natales non ultra Johannis præconium extendunt. Scriptura pariter ac Josephus de hujus baptismo loquuntur, tanquam ritu dudum in ecclesia Judaico recepto."

Jo. Andreæ Danzii Baptismus Proselit. Judaic. Thesaurus Ugolini, Tom. xxii.

[19] Judæi baptismos suos quotidianos ab Ægyptiis aut aliis in vicino gentibus hausisse videntur. Spencer. De Legibus Heb.: Lib 1, c. viii. sec. iii.

Antiquos enim lavandi et convivandi ritus, qui cultûs Judaici atque ethnici pars magna fuere, Christus in mysteria sua transtulit, et ad usus non multum dissimiles iis, quibus olim inveniebant, in baptismo et cœna consecravit. Do. Lib. iii., c. ii. sec. iv.

Baptismus Christianorum Ebraicum baptismum, quo tum parentes ipsorum, ut volerunt ipsi, tum proselyti Judaismo initiabantur, haud parum imitibatur; unde nec novus visus est hic ritus cum fide Christiana imbutis adhibebatur.

Selden. De Eutychii Ecclesiæ suæ Origines, § x.

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the father of a family received it, the rite was also administered to his children of thirteen years and under. If an adult female became a proselyte, she also received baptism. So was the ordinance both national and common.

When John the Baptist entered on his work as the forerunner of Christ, and as introducing a new religious dispensation, he found this proselyte baptism in common use. His work was to persuade the Jewish populace to receive a higher and holier religion, to proselyte them to another system. This proselyte baptism was precisely the rite he needed to indicate the purification of his converts, and to seal them over to this new religion. This baptism John practised during the years of his ministry; and so successful was he, that it became a national proselytism. There "went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

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CHAPTER XII.

THE RABBIES AND TALMUDS AS AUTHORITY.

IT appears that baptism was a common sacred rite among the Jews when John the Baptist began his mission in the wilderness of Judæa. The origin of the rite was so ancient among them as to be unknown. The Septuagint shows its existence in the times of Naaman, B.C. 804. When Gentiles were proselyted to Judaism they were baptized, and their children also.

Very few historical facts as old as these stand out so clearly in ancient record. Many corner-stones of empires, and foundations of dynasties, and chronological pivots, conceded and used as the best material of ancient history, have far more of the dust of ages and obscurity on them, than lies on these ecclesiastical facts. Doubts on such data must make the realms of ancient history mythical generally; and, unless one proposes to go into doubting as an historical sceptic, and for the policy of it, we see not how these facts can be set aside.

It may be objected, that we have quoted mainly Rabbies and the Talmuds, and Jewish authors, and that these are not to be trusted. Had the Jewish writer the least motive to falsify the records of his

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people and Church on this subject? It cannot be shown that any gain, direct or remote, would accrue to him by so doing. Very like the objector will make the old and commonplace point, that there is much in the Talmuds that is frivolous, absurd, and even bare nonsense. Very true; this is a characteristic of those Jewish writings: but does such a quality in a work disprove its historic verity? May we deny that the man made the speech because very foolish things were said in it? May we say that a sermon could not have been truthful because it was frivolous, or not genuine because it was stupid? May we deny that men have attacked the authority of the Talmuds, because the attacks were so puerile? If nonsense in a book disproves the authenticity and genuineness, what will become of the scholastic and monkish works of the middle ages on theology and philosophy and the sciences? — what of many of this age, eighteen hundred years hence?

One fact is a total refutation of the objection that the Talmuds are not to be trusted on questions of history. All ecclesiastical and exegetical writers on the authors and ceremonies and times of the New Testament, make free use of the Talmuds, where there is nothing manifestly untrue in the quotation or reference desired. Those most interested to disprove their authority on points just cited quote them on other points without any historical scepticism. One case will serve, while long chapters of illustrations could be given. In his admirable treatise on The Scriptural Law of Divorce, the Rev. Dr. Hovey, professor of theology in the Baptist Theo-

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logical Seminary at Newton, quotes the teachings of Hillel and Shammai. Of all the rabbinical teachers who furnished materials for the Jerusalem Talmud, these two men are pre-eminent; and the professor makes this reference to them, through the Talmud, with perfect propriety and safety. We also would like the privilege of quoting the same learned Rabbies and their co-workers in that vast thesaurus of Jewish antiquities.

Of course the Talmuds are to be used, like any other very ancient work, with a critical discretion. We use Josephus in that way, suspecting him where his Roman interests might warp him, and trusting him where known fact does not contradict him. Rawlinson convicts Herodotus of grave errors; but we rely on the great historian, nevertheless, where he is not convicted. In the same way, it is manifestly just to use the Jewish writings of the early Christian period.

We allow the authority of Josephus; yet we remember, when reading him, that he studied the gratification of the Romans quite as much as fidelity to his own people. He sought favor with those who had conquered and devastated his country, and so wrote with a mingled policy and truthfulness. All this we bear in mind; but we trust him where he is in no temptation to prove an unfaithful historian.

The editor of the Mischna lived and performed his work only about half a century later than Josephus; and there appears to be no good reason for not receiving his writings with the same discrimination and approval. Where the Rabbies have incorporated fa-

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bles, trifles, and absurdities into the Talmud, it must be obvious to the intelligent reader; while evidently the most that they say is truthful to the doctrines, ethics, ceremonies, and opinions of the day. The obvious fable should not lead us to reject the obvious fact. Their logic, specially on theological and moral questions, is often childish; but this does not vitiate their honestly-stated data. Their follies in moral, social, and ritual life cannot affect the truthfulness of the picture. The wrinkles and deformities in the photograph really praise the fidelity of the artist. Some of the most faithful and profitable chapters in the history of scholasticism, literature, and ethics in the middle ages are chapters of absurdities and trifles. Yet the great facts of mediæval history are thus imbedded; and, where the probabilities are favorable to a statement of fact, we credit the author for fidelity, and quote him as authority. The Talmuds must be read in the same spirit of analytic trust and distrust. When a Jewish doctor of divinity gravely discusses the question, Is it right to kill a flea on the Sabbath? we take his logic for what it is worth; but the discussion we take as a fair picture of the moral and ritualistic temper of the times. If no good reason can be shown for prejudice, prevarication, mistake, or intentional deception, we accept as historically true what he says of any religious belief, ceremony, mode of civil, social, or domestic life, in his times; and he who doubts assumes the burden of disproof.

In estimating the authoritative worth of any portion of the Talmuds, we should consider that the writers were dispersed among the nations. Their

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temple service was suspended; and by disuse their ritual law was becoming a dead-letter. Their sacred ceremonies and customs were becoming obsolete through their own dispersion; and, by consequent want of consultation and uniformity, they were becoming corrupted. Yet they fully expected a Messiah; and they believed that when he did come they would repossess the land of promise, rebuild the temple, and re-establish their religion in Judæa in all its primitive purity of ritual and spirit.

When such a time of restitution should come, they foresaw that their posterity would both wish and need an appeal to the law and the testimony, that all might be reconstructed after the pattern of the fathers. To meet the necessities of such a time they wrote out the Mischna, or oral tradition from Moses, and its Gemaras, or the commentaries of the Rabbies on it. These writings were to lie by, patient and immutable witnesses, to give testimony when again the restored Jews should rebuild the waste places, and inhabit the former desolations, and order the service of God in Mosaic and Aaronic fidelity.

Their sincerity cannot be questioned in such an expectation; nor can we see any motive to unfaithfulness in the records they should make for a coming age. As they thought that they then had every doctrine and custom as it should be, whatever their errors may have been, we see no reason why they should not write it out with a most punctilious exactness. There is an utter absence of any temptation to the contrary. If they affirmed any doctrinal, ceremonial, or ethical fact, the presumption is almost total that

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we should credit their statement. They wrote for their own people, and not for others, and had no motive to misrepresent themselves to please either Christians or Gentiles.

Moreover, the writers lived among the things of which they write. Rabbi Judah, the compiler of the Mischna, and they whose memoranda he used, must have known something personally, though in youth, of the second temple, and were the children of those who sacrificed in it and saw its terrible destruction by Titus. As the head of the sect of the Pharisees, he could not have erred as to principle and fact in what he wrote.

What, therefore, the sacred and profane histories of the early Christian centuries do not contradict in the Talmuds, ordinary obligation to authors binds us to receive, so far as a declaration of fact is concerned. Where they throw light on any custom, doctrine, or law mentioned in the Old or New Testament, it should be taken as testimony of the first class, because contemporaneous, as Prof. Hovey has quoted them on the question of divorce.

In coming, therefore, to the study of the New Testament, on any question of faith or practice, as then held in the old Abrahamic Church, or quietly assumed, admitted, or used in the Christian Church, these writings of the Jews must be a great aid. As we read the New Testament, some things seem to have been believed, assumed, and done, as a matter of course, and without any particular instruction, so far as the record shows. They appear to be part and parcel of the religious current of the times,

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recognized by Christ and the apostles, and accepted by simple assent, as a part of the Christian current that was from them to run on through the ages. It is as a contemporary and collateral light in such cases, that these rabbinical writings have their great worth. The *loci Talmudici* in the New Testament, or passages illustrated more or less by these ancient writings, are very many. The Gospel of St. Matthew alone has one hundred and twenty of them. Every scholarly commentator on the New Testament knows that there are peculiarities, forms, and ceremonies found there, in connection with the Church, without any known and formal introduction, yet with apostolic sanction, that only these Jewish writings can explain. Hundreds of keys of thought, unlocking dark recesses in the New Testament, now common property in Gentile authors, came originally from the Talmuds.

It is, therefore, a huge assumption, and an assault on the canons of historical criticism, to reject the Jewish accounts of Jewish baptisms in the times of our Lord, without making specific objections to any excepted passage.

Let us turn this thought in another light at this point, even at the expense of anticipating the argument of a future chapter. Very early in the Christian era, as early as A.D. 200, all agree that the Jews baptized infants; while with the Christians the rite was old and well established, as is also agreed, as early as A.D. 253. When did the Jews adopt the rite? And where did the Christians obtain it? There is only one historical answer.

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The history of this rite among the Jews in the time of our Lord, as furnished by the Talmuds, is the uninspired preface to the inspired history of household baptism in the Book of Acts.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT COMMAND.

"TEACH all nations [make disciples: proselyte them to my religion], baptizing them." What is that? The term is not explained. It has no qualifying words as to mode or subjects. Without comment or enlargement, do the apostles know what the ascending Master means? Shut out all history between the present and that time; go back beyond The Book of Acts and the day of Pentecost; hear for yourself that command, — and what will you do? "Baptizing them." What is the thing to be done? To whom is it to be done? Is there any antecedent or surrounding light to guide you? You cannot consult The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, the councils and commentaries and Church histories. Is there any sacred service or ceremony of the times that can explain the command? Evidently our Lord assumes that the apostles know what he means; and they do know.

In pursuing the inquiry, who, according to this last command of our ascending Lord, should be baptized, we need not so much a lexicon to define the word, or a commentary to give the opinions of the learned, as a view of the times when the Lord Jesus issued the commission.

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For it is one of the first principles of interpretation, in gaining the import of an old law, to ascertain how it would fall in with the times when it was given, how it would suit the circumstances of that day, and how those to whom it was given would naturally understand it. The time and the place of the giving of a brief and doubtful command are two admirable expositors. They are as the "two great lights" that God made in the beginning.

Let us, then, place ourselves with the eleven when they were commissioned for this baptismal work. They are in Judæa, and near the close of the first third of the first Christian century. Judaism is as yet the religion of the land. Its religious forms, rites, and ceremonies are daily seen on every hand. The eleven are commanded to go and make disciples to Christ, or proselytes to the Gospel. This is the import of that word "teach," and is so given in the marginal reading of the received version. The eleven understood this duty. They saw such religious labor in the daily life of the Jews around them. Those Jews were compassing sea and land to make proselytes; and the disciples understood, that with a deeper ardor, and for a vastly holier purpose, they were to imitate them in proselyting.

Then, when by their teaching they had gained a disciple, a proselyte to this new religion, they were to baptize him. This ordinance, as we have seen, was no novelty to them. It was from the olden time in the Holy Land. As zealous Jews formerly themselves, they had labored to gain Gentile converts, and bring them to this purifying rite; and often had they seen it administered.

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The Lake of Merom and the Sea of Galilee, as well as waters more private, had witnessed the dedication of many a proselyte. What multitudes had they seen thronging to John's baptism at Ænon, and along the Jordan! And probably the apostles themselves received this same baptism.

Then, what they were commanded now to do was no new and strange thing. The mode and nature of the ceremony were familiar to them, as common usage in their native land.

True, they were to exact a more spiritual and radical preparation for it, and were to attach a deeper significance to it; but the rite itself was to them old and familiar.

They had seen adult females receive, as proselytes, this ordinance, and so become members of the Commonwealth of Israel. They saw them in the mixed multitude that gathered so eagerly to John's baptism. So, when they made disciples and baptized them, they would, as a matter of course, include the females, though we do not find any specific order to this effect. As a matter of recorded fact, we find that they did thus infer their duty, and did baptize women.

The eleven also saw that proselyte parents, coming to this ordinance under John the Baptist, brought their little ones with them, and made them over to the new religion with the same ceremonial seal of water. They knew no case where a proselyte parent had kept back his infant child from baptism. To the male infant of a Gentile thus coming over to Judaism, they knew that baptism was as much a matter of

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course as circumcision. Each was inevitable. "The whole nation knew well enough that little children used to be baptized." It was as persistently exacted as the other ceremonies so tenaciously held and rigidly enforced by that ritual people. It was an integral part of the idea of proselyte baptism, as held and practised in those times, that it covers the child as well as the parent. This the eleven knew, and saw illustrated, and very like had practised, as Jews.

This was the usage and the teaching of those times. These were the surroundings of the disciples, when commanded to baptize their converts. An ancient and common rite, that, coming on the head, invariably covered the members, of the household, they were to administer. There is no qualifying word, no intimation, that in the new use of an old rite there is to be any change as to the sex or age of the subjects of it.

Place yourself, now, in those times, and in those circumstances; and, receiving that command, whom would you baptize? How would the sentiments and usages of the times, concerning the rite of proselyte baptism, interpret this command to you? The Jews around you, your neighbors, are industrious in making proselytes; and, gaining the head of a Gentile family, they baptize the household. You are commanded to make proselytes and baptize. You have no command or intimation to draw a dividing line between the parent and the infant child in administering the ordinance. The command is simply to baptize; as if, from all you know of usage, and all you see in practice about you, there could be no need of

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describing more specifically who should be baptized. You are left, therefore, for an interpretation of the command, to the practice of your proselyting neighbors, the Jews.

They followed the rule as the Talmud records it: "Any male child of a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day, and females that were under twelve years and a day," should be baptized.

In those circumstances could the eleven do any thing otherwise than baptize believers and their households? What was there to suggest to them in those times any other course? What was there to give to them the notion, so foreign to all the teaching and practice of the day, and of the Jewish Church from Abraham, that the infant of the believer was to be passed by?

And here it should be said that we are not to mark out a course, or provide an interpretation for the eleven, from the views and feelings of this day. We may not make up a creed and course of conduct out of our present denominational material, and carry it back to them for acceptance and use.

Out of the material for a judgment of duty that they then had, in the traditions, teachings, and practices of their times, what line of action would they naturally, and as a matter of course, mark out for themselves? As this command of our Lord is a brief and unexplained command, the import of it must be made up from the views and uses of baptism that prevailed when the command was given. As a matter of course, therefore, the eleven would proceed, even as Jews, to baptize the children of proselyte believers.

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And a separate consideration will enforce this conclusion.

We have already seen that the Church of God is one and the same, under the Jewish and Christian form of it. The Church of the apostolic age is but a continuation of the Church of the preceding ages. Its confession of faith, requisite for admission, is essentially the same, — a saving belief in the Lord Jesus Christ; though after the death of Christ this foundation faith of the Church was more clearly defined, and more fully stated and exacted. In this Church it had been from the first, as a rule, invariable and universal, that when the parent came into it his little child should receive the same seal with himself of dedication to God.

Now, the eleven, constructing no new Church, but, as apostles, building on the foundation of the prophets, and only making the outlines of that foundation more clear and definite, would naturally go on the presumption that the children of believers would continue to come into the same relations with the people of God that they had always held; and, baptism taking the place of circumcision, as an introductory rite, and adopted, too, from common Jewish usage in that day, by which the children of proselyte believers were baptized, it would be the most obvious inference, it would come in their thoughts in the line of natural sequence, that they were to baptize the children of those adults whom they proselyted and baptized into the Christian dispensation of the Church of God.

Or, take another standpoint from which to look for

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the path of duty for the eleven in obeying this command.

We have seen that our Saviour took a religious ceremony, common in his times, and promoted it to be the initiatory rite to his Church. In doing this he displaced the former rite of admission. One takes the place of the other. Now, suppose the Saviour, instead of making this change, had seen fit to continue the old rite, and so had said to the apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, circumcising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In such case could the eleven have been in any doubt whether they should administer the rite to the children of believers? Though nothing is said of children, would they not be included? Why not included, then, in a substituted rite, that was to answer all the ends of the other?

Or, vary the supposition. A Baptist Board of Missions sends a band of missionaries to a particular people, with the general order to proselyte them to Christianity, and baptize them. How shall they understand that command of the Board? And what shall be their rule in determining the proper subjects of baptism? The home usage of those who commissioned them.

Suppose the missionaries are sent by the American Board of Missions. What now shall define and limit the use of the word "baptize"? The home usage of those who commissioned them; and this on the supposition that they know what that usage is, and that they have no other means of interpreting the word "baptize," as to the question who should receive

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the rite, except the home usage of those who commissioned them.

In these last two suppositions we have the circumstances of the apostles justly set forth, as they were when our Lord put them in commission to baptize. They were to use a common and well-known rite on their adult proselytes.

Their guide in the administration of the rite must be the ordinary Jewish usage, since the command is given them in general and absolute form, without specification, qualification, or limitation. But, in the ordinary Jewish usage of that rite, the children of adult proselytes were included with their parents. Can a doubt remain, then, what course the apostles will pursue? What is there in all the circumstances to raise any doubt or hesitation in their own minds? What would you have done then and there, thus under the commission of the Lord Jesus?

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CHAPTER XIV.

OBJECTIONS.

IT is now in place to notice certain common and plausible objections. So long as these very important facts, now stated, are unknown or unadmitted, there are some objections to Infant Baptism that must lie with weight.

For, if all connection between circumcision and baptism be cut off, and if it be denied that each is substantially equivalent to the other, and if the Jewish usages of baptism be kept out of the argument, and the history of Jewish religious ceremonies in the times of John the Baptist be excluded, these objections to pædobaptism may have a peculiar force. But it is a force that they only seem to have so long as material facts are absent.

1. It is objected that the command is to baptize only believers.

And so it may be correctly said that only believers in Judaism were to receive the circumcision and baptism of a proselyte. Yet, when that proselyte had children, even so young as to be unable to believe, they were to receive these rites.

The rule among the Jews in baptizing proselytes was to baptize only believers. An adult believer

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must be found, according to the command of our Lord, before baptism could be administered, but, when found, his infant children were to be reckoned as natural adjuncts of the man. They were regarded ecclesiastically as parts of his personal responsibility, and so were not to be dissevered from him in any total dedication of himself and all his to God.

The ancient policy of God was to build up his Church by family additions; and ever regarding, as he did, the family as a unit, he embraced all when he specified the head. So, when the parent believed, the children were held also by presumption and anticipation. The policy of God was not like that of too many parents, who presume that the child will be an unbeliever, and expect it, and so treat it negligently and hopelessly, and thus make out a parental insurance and foreordination of unbelief. Unlike this unnatural process, having the seeds of death in it as an organic law, was the encircling bond of mercy and of gracious expectation in which our heavenly Father enclosed his accepted ones. How often in his covenants of mercy do we find the phrases, "children's children," "a seed to serve him," "a generation"!

On this principle his Church was built at the first, having not an individual but a family basis; and this policy was actively in practice in the times of our Saviour. He continues it in the command to baptize only believers. As a matter of theory in the Church from time immemorial, and as a theory in full practice in the Church to which they were to make proselyte additions, the apostles would, as a matter of course, gather in the little ones with the parents. To have

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done otherwise would have required, first, a radical reconstruction of the Church, and then a specific order to exclude children.

When one objects to infant baptism by saying that baptism is a sign and seal of saving faith, and that saving faith should precede it, he is obligated to explain a difficulty that his sweeping objection creates. Circumcision is called "a seal of the righteousness of faith." [1] Yet infants received this seal before they were old enough to have faith. On the same principle, whatever it be, they may receive baptism. By the same exegesis and principles infant baptism and infant circumcisism stand or fall together. The objection to the former — that faith cannot precede it — as a seal of faith, is valid against the latter. So the objection is an objection against fact. It is an objection to what actually took place, that infants, who were not old enough to exercise faith, received the seal of faith. Moreover, if want of belief should prevent infant baptism, why should it not prevent infant salvation, since it says, "He that believeth not shall be damned"?

2. It is objected that there is no command in the Bible to baptize infants.

In the light of the facts now before us, there would be no need of such a command to the apostles. The objection goes on the assumptions, that the apostles are about to organize the Church of Christ as a new institution, and that the nature of Church membership is now to be determined for the first time, and that the rite of initiation is a novel one for the times,

[1] Rom. iv. 11.

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and not interpreted and limited in the extent of its application by precedent and daily use.

But we have seen that the Church of Christ is one from the days of Abraham, and continuous through all the ages. No new Church is formed. David and Paul and the Christian converts on the day of Pentecost are members of the same Church, having the same creed. The ancient principle of membership embraced the children of the adult believer. Changing one characteristic in the seal of membership would not change this ancient principle, any more than changing the motto on a government seal would change the import and power of the seal.

We have seen, too, that our Saviour took an existing and common rite, by which the Jews admitted proselytes to Judaism, and promoted it to be the introductory rite to the Christian Church.

When the Jews used this rite, initiating a Gentile parent, they invariably applied it to his little ones. So far, then, this would be a happy ordinance to come in the place of circumcision, since it embraced the children of believers, as circumcision had done.

When, therefore, Christ commanded his apostles to baptize, what need was there to command in an especial manner the baptism of children? Instead of allowing this objection any force, it really turns on those moving it. Considering all the circumstances in the times of the apostles, there should have been a special command to exclude children from baptism, if it was not designed to have them included; for, if nothing were said, the presumption would be totally for their baptism. So the very silence of our

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Lord, that is made the ground of this objection, is virtually an affirmation of an existing command to embrace the children, and an approbation and adoption of an existing practice that did embrace them.

3. It is objected that baptism is a seal of personal righteousness or true piety, and so an unconscious infant cannot properly receive it.

The objection misapprehends the nature of the ordinance. Baptism is more a rite of dedication than of confession. The person or thing receiving the ordinance is thus sacredly set apart for God, as, when one is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the name of the sacred Trinity is called and set upon him, as a mark of new ownership.

It is also a purifying rite ceremonially, expressive of the fact that what is about to be given to God should be first purified. It is also a rite representative of that inward purification in which the Holy Spirit in regeneration dedicates the subject acceptably to God.

Now, as baptism serves as a rite of dedication, as well as for other purposes, it will at once be seen that an unconscious babe may be the subject of it. For a believing father or mother has the right to dedicate a child to God. All Christian parents agree in this. They differ only in the mode of doing it. One mode, and, as we think, a mode appointed of God, is baptism. God asks the gift of the child, that it may be his and bear his name. And, as a child is above all other wealth and worth, how fitting, when one makes a complete dedication of all he has to God, that the only immortal gift in the collected and total offering

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should be dedicated with a peculiar ceremony and seal!

4. It is objected that in infant baptism the child has no understanding of the rite, and gives no assent to it.

This is true, even as it should be. In a proper Christian state of society, when all heads of families are converted and professing Christians, baptism is an ordinance not to be understood or assented to by the subjects of it. Strictly and properly, baptism in the Christian Church belongs only to an infant, as circumcision in the Jewish Church.

In the normal use of baptism, it is a parental duty by which an immortal is dedicated to God. It classes among those duties that are to be done for another, and not by the person receiving the act. Adult baptism is a necessity created by a failure in parental duty. The parents of such an adult ought to have been godly, and to have given their child to God in this ordinance. Failing in this, the adult baptism is a necessity to cover a defect. It is irregular and abnormal.

The case of circumcision sets this objection in its true light, and shows the true time and place for baptism. The only regular and proper subject of circumcision was an infant. It was no rite for him to understand, or assent to. It was a parent's duty to God for the child; and, had the whole family of man become the people of God before circumcision was abandoned, adult circumcision would have been impossible and unknown. In its original and legitimate design it did not belong to adults. Its application to

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them was an exception to the law. And the objection that infant baptism is without the understanding and assent of the person lies equally against circumcision. By covering too much ground it destroys itself. It is an objection to a principle that underlies circumcision and baptism, and a thousand other acts that we perform for a child, — the principle that we may and often must act for the child without its assent. Baptism, when properly administered as to time, that is, in infancy, is simply and only the act of a parent; and it is no more necessary that the child comprehend and agree to it than that it comprehend and agree to the many duties that God requires us to discharge to our infant children. Adult baptism is a remedy for a defect, just as naturalization is, in constituting foreigners citizens under our government. Were there no more who could become immigrants, there could be no more naturalization. The citizenship of each would then come as a birthright, without knowledge or assent. And when infant baptism, even as circumcision, has its proper place among parental duties, as God originally designed, there will be no place for this irregular and remedial step of adult baptism. So the objection that the infant cannot understand and give assent to its baptism is not only invalid in this specific case, but it is subversive of a fundamental principle in both the divine and the family government.

The unconscious babe cannot understand or assent to the last will and testament of its dying father. But it must not thereby lose its inheritance.

5. It is objected that infant baptism deprives one

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of the privilege of making a profession of religion for himself.

This objection is founded on a false assumption. It is assumed that a profession of religion is made in the administration of the ordinance, and that a profession of religion cannot be made unless this rite is administered at the time. Here is a confounding of two things that differ. Baptism is a rite of dedication. It is performed for a person. In the act the person is the passive recipient. He is the subject. But in making a profession of religion he is the agent, the actor. The profession is made through a creed, confession, and covenant. One may be the voluntary or the involuntary subject of a dedication to God; but a profession of religion is a cordial consent to such a dedication. It is the personal declaration of one's religious faith, feelings, and purposes. In baptism one is given to God. He may be conscious of being given as an adult, or unconscious as an infant. If the former, he is not a professor by receiving the ordinance, unless he has made a declaration of his religious doctrines, experiences, and purposes. If an unconscious infant, it remains for the child to ratify the dedication in coming years, and give in his adhesion to Christ and his gospel. When he does that, he makes a profession of religion. He has been previously dedicated, and bears the seal of the act.

The objection, moreover, lies on the strange assumption, that all who come into the Church on a profession of faith, having received only infant baptism, are not professors of religion by any personal act of their own. The bare statement of such an

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assumption refutes the objection. All nominally in the Christian Church, having received none but infant baptism, are reckoned and held as professors of religion in fact and form, because they made a public profession. By the one voice of common consent they are called professors. Yet they were not constituted such by infant baptism. Though baptized in infancy, if they had made no personal confession of Christ when they came to years of discretion, they would not be regarded as professors of religion. They became such by a personal and a subsequent act.

There are many ten thousands in our congregations who were baptized in infancy, and yet no one calls them professors of religion. They have been solemnly given to God by their believing parents. They have received the appointed rite of dedication. They properly belong to God, and are in the generation of his people. But they have not confessed into the faith of Abraham. They have not publicly received Christ as a personal Saviour, and his teaching as their rule of life. When they do this the act will be a profession of religion. The public and common voice of all denominations will say, that in that personal confession of Christ they made a profession of religion.

Now, all this common and public judgment shows two things. First, that infant baptism is not regarded as a profession of religion, and secondly, that it does not stand in the way of making a profession, when an adult inclines so to do.

So the parental duty of infant dedication does in

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no way interfere with the personal duty and privilege, in conscious and adult years, of professing Christ.

And, moreover, the assumption, that infant baptism deprives one of the privilege of making a profession of religion for himself, is against the judgment and practice of the Christian Church as a body. It is true that truth and right have no particular fellowship with numbers, nor are they determined by majorities. Yet the acceptance of a Christian principle or policy, by the Church of Christ as a body, must and should have its moral weight in determining the correctness of that principle or policy. In this country more than three-fourths of the Christian Church, embracing all denominations, have the theory and practice of Infant Baptism. And they do not regard it as displacing, or interfering with a personal profession of religion, when the baptized infant arrives at adult years. And this remark is true of nineteen-twentieths of those connected with the Christian denominations in Great Britain. And it is well known that the same views are held by the Greek Church, the Romish Church, and the Armenian and Syrian Churches. So that in the aggregate of Christendom it is but a very small number who feel the objection that we are now considering, that infant baptism interferes with the liberty of a personal profession of religion. It is very true that this citation of numbers and authorities is not proof absolute. But it shows that the judgment of the Christian world is against the assumption in this objection, and affirms the position that one who has received infant baptism is as free to profess Christ as is the one who never received it.

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6. It is objected that if Infant Baptism comes in to fill the office of infant circumcision, it ought to be limited to the subjects of circumcision, that is, male children.

The inclusion of females in the initiatory rite to the Christian Church was a fruit of the centuries. Among the Eastern nations, in the ages before Christ, woman had no equal, or even prominent position with man. Individuality and personal responsibility did not attach to her as to man. In matters of a civil, social, and religious nature, woman was reckoned without consultation, and, by silent consent, with the husband or father or elder brother, or nearest male kin. An obscure and inferior place was assigned to woman, even from birth. While the male infant was welcomed with exultation and rejoicing, a quiet gratitude or ill-concealed disappointment welcomed the female; and the Chinese proverb was a fair expression of the feelings of the Orientals on this point: "He is happiest in daughters who has only sons." [1]

[1] The following extract from an Oriental correspondent will shed much light on the question before us:—

"One day I called on an old Mohammedan in Tripoli; and, as I entered the outer door, I saw some little girls and some larger ones, running towards the women's rooms to get out of my way. A boy who was with me said that they were the daughters of the old man. As I came into the room where he was, he arose from his cushion on the floor, placed his right hand on his forehead, and then on his breast, and, bowing very gracefully, said, 'May your morning be blessed, your Excellency! Peace to your life!'

"In a few moments a servant-boy brought little cups of jet-black coffee, without sugar or milk; and after I had taken a cup, and said a few words to the old white-bearded Moslem, I asked him how many children he had. He replied at once, 'I have no children at all.'

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While the adoption of sons was common among the Jews, the Bible gives no instance of the adoption of a daughter. The practice of polygamy and concubinage, so common in the irregularities of the patriarchs and of the Jewish nation, shows woman on this same low grade. For the hardness of their hearts, and the general degeneracy of those times, God suffered and tolerated this relative depression, and at times ignoring, of woman. And, in his institutes for his people, he regarded this popular estimate of woman. He accommodated his administration to the times and to the notions of his people. In the same spirit and policy of accommodation to a sensuous age, he made his worship and the religious services generally to partake of what was visible, terrible, and impressive to the beholder. It was for a later dispensation to introduce a more spiritual worship.

So in the spirit and practice of the Abrahamic and

"I then said, 'Whose daughters are those whom I saw running across the court?'

"'Oh!' said he, 'those are mine; but they are *nothing but girls!*

"At another time, calling on a Mohammedan, I asked him how many children he had; and he replied, 'I have four sons; but, praise to God, I have no daughters!'

"Most of the people in Syria think it a great hardship when a daughter is born; but when they become Christians they think more wisely.

"A few months ago, an infant daughter was born in the family of Antonine Yanni, a Protestant in Tripoli; and all the relatives and friends came to weep with him on account of the dreadful thing which had happened to the family. The grandmother of the little infant said that she would not kiss her for six months, because she was a girl! But when the people came in, Yanni told them, 'I do not wish your tears. I love my daughter, and I hope to train her up to love the Saviour and do good. I am not a heathen any longer, and a daughter is as precious to me as a son once was.'"

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Jewish ages, woman was left in obscurity in the initiatory rite to the Church. She went in by inference, or as conjoined to man, and unreckoned personally, as a child goes with its parents in a public conveyance.

But when Christianity came in, woman had gained more of personality and isolation as an individual; and this new and better covenant was designed to place her more entirely in a position of separateness and private responsibilty. In Christ Jesus there was to be "neither male nor female." So the enlarged compass of the initiatory rite to the Church was in keeping with the growth of opinion and with that noble purpose and work of elevation that the gospel was to achieve for woman. Hence the new seal of personal dedication to God was adopted and introduced of Christ to mark the man and the woman separately, as having an equal personality and responsibility.

Thus Christ would show a recovery of the race from that obscuration of woman into which she had fallen, and place man and woman on the common platform of a separate and equal responsibility, and as separate and equal moral heirs to a common immortality, as it was in the beginning.

It should also be observed that a change of the seal from circumcision to baptism was under no such restraint or necessity as that the Head of the Church could not enlarge the application of the new seal. How many and important changes did he make, in the government of his spiritual house, in his own right authority. Even if we could see no aptness in

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the extended use of the new seal, it would be our duty to receive it, since his authority is adequate for any variations. So we conclude that Infant Baptism may be said to fill the purpose of circumcision, though it includes females, and doubles the original number of subjects.

We have seen that the change in the seal of the initiatory rite to the Church, so as to embrace woman, was a change in accordance with the changed position of woman as a separate and accountable individual in society. This change was distinctly marked in the times of our Saviour.

Take one section in the history of the Church of God, from the nativity to the end of the apostolic age, about one hundred years. How prominent in the Church is woman made in that century, beginning with the annunciation to Elizabeth. In the life and labors of the Saviour, if the cases of repentance, faith, and untiring, unfaltering, and daring devotion to him, are not the most numerous, they are the most conspicuous, as recorded of woman. We find nowhere in the Gospels illustrations of purer, firmer faith. The position, the undying affection, the sublime moral heroism, of those women at the Cross and at the sepulchre, were prophetic of the new relations in which woman would stand to the interests of the kingdom of Christ. They were prophetic, too, of those civil and social relations of woman, and her auxiliary relations to the great human and moral enterprises, that were now to open on the world.

The providential position of those "many women" at the Cross was indicative of the new place that

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Christianity was about to give to woman. In the apostolic age, also, we find incidental but significant allusions to the fact that woman was beginning to fill her newly appointed place in the Christian Church, and in the Christian ages.

In that first Church meeting of Christian membership, a meeting of many days' continuance, "with one accord, in prayer and supplication," a meeting heralding the new and glorious dispensation of the Spirit, it was a meeting "with the women." Dorcas and Damaris, whose hearts the Lord opened, have worthy mention by inspired pen, as concessions of peculiar importance. And when Paul and Silas laid the Christian foundations of the Church at Thessalonica, the first membership embraced "chief women, not a few." And it is an exceedingly interesting and singular fact that the first gospel sermon that was preached in Europe was preached to a company of women. The place was the bank of a river, outside the walls of Philippi; and the first Christian proselyte and convert in all Europe was a woman named Lydia.

How degraded the condition of woman at that time, on that dark continent, and what an apocalypse of mercy was to be opened to her in the introduction of the gospel! It was fitting that the first hearers of it should be of those who were to be most richly blessed by it, and that the first convert should be one from those who were to share most amply in its mercies. And was it nothing significant, designed, and typical, that the first case of baptism in all Europe was a case of household baptism? For

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Lydia "was baptized, and her household." It was as if he who said to Paul in vision, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," had also said, "All the households of this benighted continent must be dedicated to God."

Thus, after the true Abrahamic pattern, the Church of Christ was developed at Philippi on the family basis. And when Paul addressed his epistle to this Church, ten years afterwards, he has a lively remembrance of aid in the gospel that the women of that Church rendered; and he says, "Help those women which labor with me in the gospel."

These incidental and wayside facts concerning woman, furnished by the New Testament, show her as coming into a new light. The Old Testament gives her no such prominence. Evidently a great change in her position in society has been wrought, and power has come to her relief that promises a greater. It was not the genius and spirit of the Old Testament system; it was not the feeling or theory of the Eastern nations; it was reserved for this last, perfect, world-wide Christian system to say, "The woman is the glory of the man." A declaration how unlike the proverb already quoted, that was the condensed creed of the Orient on the relative position of woman, "He is happiest in daughters who has only sons."

The Lord Jesus understood the power and purpose of his gospel, and he foresaw the wide compass of changes that it would work for woman. It was to prove an elevating system for the sex, and an equalizing system between the sexes. While nature and

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the gospel would unite to assign different spheres of duty and of honor for the two, the gospel, at his will, was to set forth woman as the equal of man in inherent worth, in acquired excellence, in power for her sphere, in importance as an individual, in rights and immunities as a separate person before God.

The gospel assigned to woman a place and an efficiency in the conversion of the world to God, that the Old Testament economy never contemplated. We see this fact made evident wherever Christianity is unfolded and made predominant. In all the great social, moral, and religious movements of our day, the force that woman lends to them is immense. In the entire membership of the churches, we find two-thirds of it to be of females. An individuality, a personality, and an accountability, now attach to woman, to which the Abrahamic and Mosaic dispensations were utter strangers. As this was the design, so it is the fruit, of Christianity.

The Saviour, designing and foreseeing this changed and prominent position of woman, saw fit to make a change in the initiatory rite to the Church, that would mark her equality with man. The first rite corresponded with the spirit and custom of the ages, through which it continued in overlooking woman. The second agrees with the new relations in which the gospel places her in community, as a person, having all the privileges and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

As master of ceremonies in his own house, the Church, it was, therefore, for him to make this, or any other change that seemed good to him. The fitness

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of the change of rites, and the enlarged application, in the case in question, must commend itself to all, as corresponding with the change in the social, moral, and religious position of woman.

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CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.

"OF such is the kingdom of heaven." The phrases, "kingdom of heaven," and "kingdom of God," are frequently used in the New Testament. There is also several times introduced the expression "the kingdom of Christ," or its equivalent. These three phrases have the same general import.

The meaning and phraseology are brought forward into the New Testament from the Old. And they mean the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah. Many of the Jews had attributed to this reign of Christ a personal, civil, and temporal character. He was to be king of the Jews, visible, triumphant, and glorious, above all the glories that attach to any earthly monarch. But the more devout Jews, as Zacharias and Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and Joseph,[1] had the spiritual, and what is now common view, of the reign of Christ. It was to be a reign without any civil organization or geographical limits. And, so far as it had any visible embodiment, it was merely as a means of showing its spiritual, religious, and heavenly origin and character. The true nature of

[1] Luke i. 67, ii. 25, 36, xxiii. 50–51.

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this kingdom, St. Paul defines when he says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And herein he but follows the teaching of the King himself: "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show. Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Hence those words to Nicodemus, and repeated so emphatically: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

The only external and visible manifestation of this kingdom, as an organization on earth, the Saviour set forth in the Church. Into it he designed to gather his friends, followers, and subjects. His people, as distinct from those of any other kingdom or prince, were to be embodied in this holy community. It is the only visible constitution of a kingdom that he has here. It is, under a modified and Christianized form, the continuation, from the days of patriarchs and prophets, of the visible gathering and manifestation of the people of God.

We are to bear in mind that the only kingdom that God has attempted to establish in this world, since the apostacy, is Messianic. It stands on the theory and work of Redemption. Christ, as its glorious Head, commenced its organization in that first promise to our fallen parents. And the production of a people, from age to age, to serve him, was but giving a practical and visible effect to the purpose and plan of a spiritual kingdom on earth. And the Saviour declares this whole truth, when he says,

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"He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Herein he claims to himself a party and a leadership in it, and at the same time he classes all others in a party opposed to him. And these two parties exhaust the human family.

This party, this kingdom of Christ, has been one and the same in all time hitherto. In the ages of patriarchs and prophets, during those many centuries before Christ, all who belonged to his party, to this "kingdom of God," were aggregated in the Church of God. The Church had not then that sharply defined spiritual border which we now assign to a particular and local Church. It had many nominal, as well as actual believers, wise and foolish virgins, tares and wheat.

Such was the nature, composition, and visible manifestation of "the kingdom of God," when they brought young children to Christ. We are now to remember that these children, thus brought to the Saviour, were Jewish children, and so church-members. They were nominally members of the kingdom of God. As such Christ owns them, and defends their privilege and right to be brought to him, as the real Head of that kingdom, for his blessing. We have no evidence that these children were peculiar for any spiritual traits, or were after any manner different from the thousands of others in the region, that they were thus brought to Christ. There is no evidence that they were regenerated children, or had any thing more to commend them to the favor of the Saviour than the common amiabili-

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ties of childhood, excepting their relation to this "kingdom."

They were Jewish children, and so members of the Church, according to its Abrahamic constitution, and the uniform practice of God's ancient people. This membership the Saviour recognizes and declares, when he says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." "As the only visible kingdom of God on earth, its terms of membership include these, and they should not be withheld from my notice and favor, the only visible Head of this kingdom on earth." And when his disciples rebuked those who brought them "he was much displeased." It was an interference with the relations that God had constituted between his kingdom and the little children, that he did not like. And he rebuked it. Such an exclusion of the children of believers from immemorial Church privileges merited his rebuke; and he gave it.

Some have supposed that the Saviour is here speaking of the heavenly kingdom, or state of the blessed in glory. But, as ordinary children, could he make this affirmation of them? Or could he say that others should enter heaven who were like these children, when at the time these children may have been destitute of the distinguishing mark that qualifies for heaven, namely, the new heart?

If, however, he does here declare their certainty of membership in the kingdom of glory, much more may we suppose he would allow their membership in his kingdom, or Church, on earth.

Others have supposed that the Saviour did not intend to teach that these children were actually

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members of his kingdom, but only that adults who have qualities like them could be members. But can we suppose that adults would be admitted to membership because they resembled children in certain particulars, while the children themselves would be excluded? Likeness to a child the ground of admission, and the child itself denied? We see no reason for this; nor do we believe that the Saviour meant to teach such a principle. The kingdom of heaven, he says, has in it such persons as these.

Moreover, that the children themselves were to be included in the membership is evident from the use of the word rendered "of such," — *τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων*. It includes the person or thing referred to, as a specimen or representative of a class. A few cases will make this evident. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:"[2] here the little child, whom others must be like to enter the kingdom of heaven, is itself received of Christ. "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them:"[3] Here "such parables" refers to those just spoken, and so includes them. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him:"[4] here "such" refers to the true worshippers mentioned, who are of course included. "Ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil:"[5] this boasting specified is evil, and every other like it. Demetrius the silversmith called the craftsmen together "with the

[2] Matt. xviii. 5. [3] Mark iv. 33. [4] John iv. 23. [5] James iv. 16.

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workmen of like [such] occupation:" [6] here his own and their occupations are included as branches of the one business of making shrines for Diana. These cases of illustration might be very much multiplied, showing that the words "of such" include the person or thing in question, as well as those similar. And so we conclude, that, whatever the kingdom or membership obtained by those who are like little children, these children obtain the same. They are included in the favor that adults obtain by being like them.

[6] Acts xix. 25.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE SILENCE OF CHRIST.

THE ancient Church of God embraced the children of its members. From Abraham to Christ this was a principle and a practice. Since the most of its members entered it in infancy, it was a body, primarily, of children. They grew up in it; and the waste made by death was repaired by their continual addition.

Suppose, now, that this principle and usage are to be changed in the Christian form of the Church; that children are to be excluded, and only adults admitted: would the Saviour have so insisted on their membership in it, as has been shown in the last chapter? He is among a Jewish population, and before a Jewish audience, who, with their households, are members of the Church. If a change is about to be made in the basis of membership, they are greatly concerned to know it. So radical a reconstruction of its constitution about to be made, and the relations of children to it about to be so totally changed, would the Saviour have said nothing to imply the change? His treatment of the children in this case implies more than a silent approbation of the ancient custom concerning their membership. He virtually

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pleads for it. He remonstrates against their exclusion.

If he were about to institute a new order of things in the Church, and omit the children, would he have neglected so fitting an opportunity to unfold or intimate the new policy?

And, after he had shown this marked disapproval of their overlooking the children, how could the disciples afterward assume to exclude them from their ancient right and place, without the most specific command? If they were to be dropped in making up the membership of the Christian Church, the difference between it and the ancient Church would be very great. So radical and wide-reaching a change would be worthy of a particular specification and order from the Head of the Church.

Yet this so fitting occasion for it goes by, not only without the intimation of any change, but with a treatment of children in their relations to the kingdom that must accord most fully with the high-toned conservatism of a Jew in the matter. If a new policy concerning children did come into the Church, this was the transition period. This occasion not only invited, but seemed to demand, an allusion to it. And, if the change were taking place, the silence of the Saviour on it at this time is unaccountable. But assume that no change was taking place in their relations to the Church, and his entire treatment of these children, and of those who opposed their presentation, is perfectly natural, and accordant with the policy and practice of ages.

Consider the silence of our Lord on this great issue

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in another case. When about to leave the world, he commands his apostles to go abroad, make disciples, and baptize them. We have already considered how they would naturally and necessarily understand this command. For their only knowledge of baptism was gained from its practice among the Jews, and in the introduction of proselytes to Judaism. And in this practice the children of the adult proselyte were baptized as a matter of course. It was not an open question whether they should be. And so, with no qualifications or exceptions in the command, they would naturally and necessarily, in baptizing an adult proselyte to Christianity, include in the rite his children, if he had any.

Considering, therefore, this common practice in Judæa, when the Saviour gave his last command, and seeing the obvious and natural interpretation that the apostles would give to it, the omission of every qualifying or limiting clause in it touching children is significant.

It may be said that the command limits the rite to believers. This is true, while yet it does not touch the question of the baptism of children. For proselyte baptism, without other instruction, was the model for the apostles. In administering it, the Jews were limited by command to baptize only believers in Judaism. This command to them was as strict as the command of Christ to the apostles to baptize only believers. Yet they always included the children of the believers when they baptized a proselyte. So the apostles would naturally do the same; and so the command to baptize only believ-

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ers is no limitation of the command touching children.

The omission of the Saviour, therefore, to qualify or limit the command by some reference for the exclusion of children is a very emphatic omission. The inference, in the circumstances, that they would be included unless specifically excluded, becomes an index to his purpose to retain for them the relation to the Church that they had had from time immemorial. If he said nothing to prevent an obvious conclusion from known facts and common practices, then we must not turn aside from the obvious conclusion that he designed that inference to be drawn. For we must remember the common practice and rule of interpretation, — that changes, variations from usage, and not the continuance of a usage, call for remark. Silence leaves a rite or custom undisturbed in its continuance. Its modification, specially if it be radical, is what is spoken of. It is the new, not the old, that occasions remark.

We revise some of the statutes of the State at each session of the legislature. The law or section of which nothing is said holds over with full force and without any allusion. The ancient and original statute concerning admissions to the Church of God provides for and requires the admission of the children of the adult member. In the transition period of this one Church from the old to the new dispensation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, revises this statute of admission so far as to make baptism take the place of circumcision: so, where the statute formerly read "circumcise," it is changed to read "baptize."

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Making no other change in the statute, what remains unchanged holds over with full force under the new dispensation; and so the present divine law of admission provides for and requires the admission of the children of the adult member, the silence of the lawgiver implying no change.

Viewing, therefore, the common use made of baptism, when our Saviour took it up from among the Jews, and adopted it as the substitute for circumcision in the new dispensation, and regarding the views that the apostles must naturally and necessarily have had of their application of the rite under the last command of Christ, we cannot but regard that command, thus given without qualification or limitation, as binding and intending to bind the apostles to the doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism. Previous practices in the Church, and those common and daily practices among the Jews, and all the attendant circumstances, demand a specified omission and exclusion of the children, if they were to be omitted. The argument on this question demands that those who deny infant baptism should show where it is prohibited. All the facts we have adduced show that it comes as a matter of course from the circumstances of the times, and the command of our Lord. The children having been always included aforetime in God's Church economy, if they are now to be cast out, in this transition from the old to the new dispensation, they who affirm it assume the burden of proof, and must show by what command or lawful inference they are rejected. It is Christ who says, "Forbid them not."

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE POSITION OF THE APOSTLES.

IN a scriptural inquiry concerning the doctrine and practice of infant baptism, it is very important to learn what was usage with the apostles. We now open this branch of the general subject; and in doing this it is necessary to remember, while we proceed, a few facts. By keeping these facts before us, we shall place ourselves in the position and circumstances of the apostles, and so be the better able to judge of their doctrine and practice in this thing.

We must remember, then, that household baptism was a common practice in the times of the apostles, and among their own people the Jews, before the manifestation of the Christian Church. They grew up in the sight of this usage. The baptism of children was familiar to them from their own childhood. It was administered to the little ones of a proselyte as a matter of course. So, from the very source and practice whence they derived their ideas of baptism at all, they took also the idea, that, when it was applied to an adult believer in Judaism, it was also to be applied to his children, so far as they could yet be regarded as infants.

We must also remember that they had no concep-

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tion or expectation of a new Church. The ancient Church of God was to be continued as a matter of course. The gracious, promised, and prophesied time of its enlargement had come, when the Gentiles should flow unto it. Instead of any new tabernacle, Zion was to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, and so enlarge the covering of her tent for all the nations. The old "olive-tree" was to be preserved, and Gentile grafts inserted. Even the Jewish limbs that had been broken off by unbelief were to be recovered, and "graffed into their own olive-tree."[1] So in that first apostolic preaching, under the last commission, and in the first Christian revival, the promise of mercy for the latter days is interpreted to cover Jews. And when those three thousand, a mixed multitude of Jews "out of every nation under heaven," received Christ and Christian baptism, and "the same day were added unto them," — the company of apostles and disciples, — they were those broken branches "graffed into their own olive-tree again." These were the first professors of religion that the apostles received into the Church. And they were received into "their own olive-tree," the ancient, original Church of God. To this same body the apostles added all their other converts, Jewish and Gentile. To the Jew it was his own, the Jewish Church, and to the Gentile it was the Christian Church. So we see that both were but different names and dispensations of one and the same body.

This Pentecostal revival and ingathering of con-

[1] Rom. xi. 17-24.

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verts was the time to constitute and set forth a new Church, if any such thing was to be ever done. This was the beginning, properly, of Christian preaching, Christian baptism, and Christian profession of religion. But the three thousand converts went into "their own" Church, the ancient "olive-tree" of God; and all converts under the apostles followed them. So no new Church was ever constituted.

Then we must remember, too, in this connection, that the children of believers were also included in this ancient Church. The apostles not only knew this to be universal practice, but that it was an essential in the constitution and usage of the body. Nay, more: they knew that they themselves had come into it in their infancy. No peculiarity of the ancient Church was more marked than its infant membership. No condition of adult membership was more stringently enforced than this dedication of the children to God. A Jew esteemed few, if any, of his rights and privileges so precious and inalienable as the one to place his child within the sacred enclosure of the people of God.

All this was well known to the apostles, as a law in Israel, and a universal custom with the chosen of God. And these very apostles, who were still only Jews who had "found the Christ" and accepted him, had all the deep scriptural and traditional feelings and prejudices of a Jew on this question.

This we must bear in mind while inquiring for their usage in Infant Baptism. At the same time we must bear in mind that the Saviour had given them, so far as the record shows, no intimation that

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the relations of the children of believers to the Church were to be disturbed in the new dispensation.

Thus we see, that, if the policy was now to be introduced of overlooking and excluding children when their parents were admitted, it would be a radical, conspicuous, and wide-working change in the ancient order of things.

Among other things, therefore, we must also remember this: that so organic a change as the omission of the children, if it took place, must have become the topic of frequent remark. All will see that the change, if made, was very great. Prior to the constitution of any Church in this world, it would be an exceedingly broad question whether children should be recognized or ignored. It is now a most significant difference between two churches, so called, that one expects infant dedication, and the other refuses it. Much more would the violent change discarding it, when it had been universal practice, be a change provoking attention and remark. The apostles, still Jews, and laboring among their brethren, and as a first addition receiving so many of them, would, as a natural step and as a necessity, explain this marked rejection of their little ones. What conference, and collision often, on other points, with their "kinsmen according to the flesh!" How repeated and continuous, even in the Book of Acts, and how often in the Epistles, the allusion to controversies with the Jews! Yet not once does an apostle drop a remark in the way of explanation or defence, concerning this supposed exclusion of the children from their ancient relations and most endeared privileges.

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Now, before coming to the inquiry what they said and did concerning the usage in question, can we presume on a universal and profound silence by them, while so radical a change in the theory and practice of the Church of God is taking place?

But, on the other hand, if no change were to take place in the relations of the children of believers to the Church, then very little if any remark would be called for or made concerning them. If the universal usage of more than nineteen hundred years were abrogated, the change might well create a sensation and discussion; and apostles would come to the defence. But the continuance of that usage would naturally be in comparative silence. What would there be in its continuance to call forth inquiry, explanation, or apology? It is change, not the uniform and the stereotyped, that occasions remarks and discussions. The sabbath is not mentioned for about four hundred years between the times of Joshua and of David. The continuance of the institution and its observance did not call for any remark on it. Circumcision is not mentioned for about eight hundred and fifty years between the times of Moses and of Jeremiah. The continuance and observance of the ceremony did not give occasion for any allusion to it. The daily and annual sacrifices in the temple for ages are not mentioned; but their interruption is faithfully chronicled.

So, if the relations of children to the Church are continued from patriarchial and prophetic through apostolic times, we should not expect to find much, if, indeed, any thing, said about it. The circum-

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stances would not call for remark. Silence would be the most conclusive argument for the continuance of those relations.

These, then, are the circumstances in which the apostles enter on their work under the last command of the Master.

They are to labor for the extension of the ancient kingdom "from sea to sea." The Jew is to be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, and so stand with Abraham indeed in his covenant relations. The Gentiles are to be led to accept the Messiah, and so come in as the children of Abraham, assured that, if they be Christ's, then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. They are not to disorganize or destroy, but fulfil, like their Master; not innovators, but restorers of the old paths. St. John is to preach the Messiah found, as Isaiah preached one to come; and the two are to swell the ranks for the one and common communion.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS.

THE last chapter puts us into the position of the apostles. Standing back there, we remember and feel with their experiences; we hear the final command of the Master with their understandings; and we look forward to work by such ways and means as their circumstances would suggest. Now we are ready to go forward, and examine apostolic action in the matter under inquiry, as set forth in The Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles.

Their main effort appears to have been to convince men that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and that they should repent of sin, trust in him for salvation, and publicly confess him.

To carry these points they urge their great arguments, and incur their great perils. To Jewish audiences and readers they argue these points from the Scriptures, showing that what they preach is but an unfolding and continuation of the faith of Abraham. In all this they say but little of those under adult or responsible years.

The disposition of children, so far as their religious relations were concerned, seems to have been according to a settled and well-understood policy. It did

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not, apparently, call for modification, explanation, or defence.

There is occasionally an allusion, incidentally made, that covers children; but generally they remain unnoticed, just as we may suppose they would under an ancient and universal usage. Hence the objection is of little account, that only three instances of household baptism are recorded in the New Testament. Even if these three instances proved Infant Baptism, they would add but little to the force of the general argument. Children being always included in the Church before, and being brought always by baptism into Israel with the proselyte parent, and being reckoned by Christ as members of his kingdom, and no exception of them being made in his command to make continued additions by baptism, it is to be held that they continued to be reckoned and gathered with the believing and professing parents. So, the greater the silence in the New Testament concerning them, the stronger the inference that their relations have not been changed. Hence the great mistake of those who reject household consecration because there is no positive command for it in the New Testament. It had been commanded and practised among the people of God for nineteen hundred years. In a continuation of the doctrines and principles and Church-organization that had prevailed for nineteen centuries, why demand a specific command for one only of the many items continued? As well demand that the ten commandments must be re-enacted in order to be in force under the Christian dispensation.

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So, if those of the opposing theory, with much special labor, seem to show that children were not of necessity included in the three cases of household baptism, it makes nothing against the main argument for the institution. The specific mention of infant baptism by the apostles is no more necessary to complete the proof of it, than the mention of the sabbath during those four hundred years between Joshua and David, or the mention of circumcision during those eight hundred and fifty years between Moses and Jeremiah, is necessary to prove the continued observance of those institutions. The only thing that required a specific mention and assertion in all this matter was the change of seal from circumcision to baptism. This change was made and practised during the life of the Saviour, and finally and specially commanded when he said, "Go teach all nations, baptizing," instead of circumcising as aforetime.

The explanation, therefore, of these three cases of household baptism may be safely passed by as a matter of indifference. We can afford to leave them to the free use of those who deny the ordinance in question, if they will use them fairly. The extremest favorable construction for themselves that they can put on them is that children are not mentioned in them; and, as they are not absolutely, universally, and invariably included under the word "household," there may have been none in these three households.

But this does not prove that there were in them no children; nor may they press their use so far as this. If they ask us for the family register of Lydia and of the jailer and of Stephanas, to show the

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names and ages of children there, before we can use these cases to establish the practice of infant baptism, we, in turn, ask of them those registers to show that there were no children, before they urge the cases against us. So the whole argument from these cases is an argument from probabilities. Before dismissing it, let us look at it a moment in this light. What is probable, — that there were or were not children in any one of those three households? As a general rule, what is the fact as to finding or not finding children in a "household" or family? And, according to ecclesiastical law and usage in the land and times of these three cases, we reckon females of twelve years and a day, and males of thirteen years and a day, and under, as children. If any one will take the households or families in any ward, district, or village with which he is familiar, he will find that a large majority of them have children under twelve and thirteen years. An investigation of facts will show this. If the inquiry be raised concerning an unknown family, the probabilities are altogether in favor of the hypothesis that children will be found in it. These general observations and impressions may be confirmed by facts from census returns. In England, in 1837, 42,203 families, under the head of "husband and wife," were taken in order, that is, as they came in going from house to house. Of these, 30,256 had children.[1] This fact shows children in nearly two-thirds of the families. When the census of New York was taken in 1865, it was taken by families, with special reference

[1] United-States Census, 1850: Compend. p. 101.

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to children. To each of the women who were or had been married, of whom there were 842,562, the question was put, whether she had had children; and only 115,252 answered in the negative. In this case six families out of every seven had had children; but no registry shows what proportion had them yet under the age of thirteen.

Now, as the very term "household" or family implies the marriage relation, the probability is strong (three to four and six to seven, according to the above facts), that, in either one of the three cases before us taken separately, there were children. In the absence of any positive proof either way, this is a reasonable conclusion. If we take the three cases together, the probability rises very much, that among them there was at least one family having children. So, while the opponents of this institution incline to make much of these three cases, we specially mark the fact, that the strength of their argument from them lies in the very limited number of cases. A large number of such instances would increase the probability to a certainty, that there must have been children among them. How doubtful an argument is that whose weakness is increased with the increase of the facts on which it professes to be based! In ordinary argument, the more facts bearing on the point the better. But here the safety of the conclusion sought lies in the fewness of the data. Indeed, it is an extraordinary argument and most singular logic that so uses three facts to establish a point where three times three would disprove it beyond a reasonable doubt. But we must not yet take our leave of the "household"

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of Lydia and of the jailer and of Stephanas. The use of this word "household" in the Scriptures has an important bearing in balancing the probabilities on this question. The original word here translated "household" is the only word in New-Testament Greek by which one could express the idea of a family, including parents and children; and where that idea is expressed this word is used. So, when Paul is pointing out to Timothy the qualifications for a bishop, he says, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection." Here children are included in the word "house," or household, as is evident from the last clause of the quotation. When God commanded Noah to enter the ark with all his "house," the command, as we know, included his children. When the Seventy made a Greek translation of the Old Testament about two hundred and eighty years before Christ, they used this same Greek word to express the family. The Septuagint furnishes very many instances of this; and very likely a careful examination would show a uniformity of use by them of this same word. An extensive research on this point is mentioned by Taylor, the editor of Calmet's Bible Dictionary, and shows a conclusive result. He reports the examination of about three hundred instances of the use of this word as applied to persons, all which denoted a family with children.[2]

There is one other item of evidence on the import of the word "household," that should here be

[2] See Apostolic Baptism, by C. Taylor; specially on the uses of *οἶκος* and *οἰκία*.

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noticed. In the first Christian century, a translation of the New Testament was made into the Old Syriac or Peshito. This version uses the phrase or idiom "sons of the house" for household. So in the passage concerning Lydia it reads, "And when she was baptized, and the sons of her house." The same is said of the exemplary wife in Prov. xxxi. 15, 21: "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to the sons of her house" [household]. "She is not afraid of the snow for the sons of her house" [household]. So also in Eccl. ii. 7: "I got me servants and maidens, and sons of my house were born to me." In the authorized version it reads, "And I had servants born in my house." Here the reference is beyond question.

Of this translation certain things are to be noted that give it a peculiar weight of influence. It was completed before the close of the first century, or very early in the second. Then the Peshito translator or translators of the New Testament had probably known some of the apostles personally: they lived in the very region where the apostles labored. Being, then, on the ground of their labors, if not in the time, and making this translation for those who had learned to love the Christian Scriptures, those translating had two great advantages, — a knowledge of apostolic custom as to "household" baptism, and a knowledge of the import of the word as used by the apostles and rendered "household." No writer, it would seem, could be better situated to understand the practice, and translate the language in question. And of Lydia and her household they say in trans-

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lation, "When she was baptized, and the sons of her house."

With a concluding remark we here take leave of the three "households." The weight of argument turns on the meaning of the Greek word *οἶκος*, rendered "house" and "household." Fortunately we have two perfectly reliable witnesses on its import. Three hundred cases of Hebrew words denoting a family with children, fifty of them known to include children, are rendered in the Septuagint by *οἶκος*. This witness testifies what meaning went into the word. A translator of the first Christian century, turning the New Testament into Syriac, translates the word *οἶκος* "sons of the house." This witness testifies what meaning came out of the word.

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CHAPTER XIX.

SUMMARY OF THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT.

WE are now about to pass to another branch of this subject. It may be well to review the ground passed over, and see what progress we have made, and what positions we have obtained.

We have found that God constituted a visible church in the Abrahamic covenant; and we fail of any Scripture evidence to show that either He or his prophets, Christ or his apostles, ever constituted any other. The forms and ceremonies pertaining to its management and worship varied more or less under different dispensations; but the organic structure of the one universal Church of God remained unchanged. In it the apostles were members; and to it they united their converts, as the prophetic incoming of the Gentiles. We have seen, too, that the patriarchal and apostolic creed required for admission was one and the same, — faith in Christ.

Under the ancient *régime* the additions were made by families, so far as the adults coming in had families. So the two leading features in the Abrahamic Church were Christ as the body of doctrine, and the Family as the body of membership. We have found that Circumcision and Baptism held the same office,

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and rendered the same service, as ushers at the door of the Church.

It has been seen, too, that, while the former disappeared in the times of the apostles, the latter appeared, filling its place. And, while there is on record no divine command for this substitution of one for the other, it has been shown that an apostolic practice is as authoritative as a specific divine command; since the apostles were in the enjoyment of the promise that the Holy Ghost should teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance what Christ had said to them. In such circumstances we may well suppose that the specific command of Christ, that baptism should be substituted for circumcision, was left out of the record, and among those "many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

In the course of our inquiry we have ascertained that household baptism was common among the Jews in the times of our Lord, and was an invariable rite for the families of Gentile proselytes. So, in the last great command of Christ to his apostles, baptism had no strange or unusual import, but was defined by traditional and common usage. Therefore, if qualification was not made by Christ to the contrary, the apostles would naturally go forth baptizing families into Christianity, just as the Jews from time immemorial had been baptizing Gentile families into Judaism. Hence the rare mention of household baptism by the apostles — only three cases — is a very natural omission. A common usage, and unquestioned, is not of a nature

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to call forth remark and record, specially when the annals are as brief as the apostolic.

Though positive proof is wanting in the three cases recorded, to show that there were or were not children under twelve years, and so subjects for infant baptism, in those families, still the presumption is very strong that there were; for taking society as it is constituted, and going from house to house, two-thirds if not three-fourths of the households would be found to have members under twelve years of age.

While it is objected that the command is to baptize only believers, we have found also that the command was to circumcise only believers; and, as the children were included in the command for circumcision, so they may be included in the command for baptism, by a fair construction of language, as well as by a consideration of that proselyte usage of baptism on which the Christian use of baptism sprung up. Indeed, the most of the objections to Infant Baptism — as that the rite is designed to be a seal of true piety, that the infant has no knowledge of its import and gives no assent to it, that it deprives one of the privilege of making a profession of religion for himself, and many other such objections — lie with equal force against the rite of circumcision. The objections over-reach in their design, and break in on the economy of God for his Church as set forth in the Old Testament.

Thus far we have brought the argument, extending it through apostolic times. It is now a matter of first importance among auxiliary evidences, to know what

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was the practice in those churches founded by the apostles, in the first centuries of the Christian era. We now, therefore, pass to the Historical Argument for Infant Baptism.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT OPENED.

IN the light and strength of the argument, as thus far developed, let us assume, yet only for the time being, that the Christian Church moved off from apostolic times into the centuries, with this usage of infant consecration in common practice. Wherever, in the cities of the East, a branch of the Church was established, let us, for a little, presume that this rite came into practice. We will not declare that it was so: we will only assume it, and for this reason, that any historical evidence bearing on the question may appear in its true circumstances, and have its due weight. Unless the rite is wholly a forgery, and was foisted into the Church among the corruptions of early times, its practice must have been common in the two and three opening centuries of the Christian era. If a practice at all, it was probably general and without controversy. Only as an innovation would it be likely to be discussed.

Then, if practised thus as a rite not to be questioned, we should not look to find much said concerning it by the writers of those times. It would stand among the acts that were performed as a matter of course, and so called for remark or allusion but sel-

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dom, and then incidentally, as the keeping of the sabbath and circumcision are not mentioned for centuries in Jewish history.

A remark of Augustine may be quoted in this place as pertinent and illustrative. Pelagius, in the great controversy occasioned by his denial of the doctrine of original sin, accused Augustine of originating the doctrine, and, as proof, affirmed that nothing was said or heard of it in the earlier Church. Augustine aptly replies, "What need is there that we should examine the works of those who lived before this heresy [the Pelagian] arose, and so had no occasion to be employed in solving the difficult question? — which no doubt they would have done, if they had been compelled to reply to such things."

If no controversy should be raised concerning the authority of the rite, and no sect spring up denying it, the fact of its performance, or the question as to the proper subject for it, might naturally pass through the first three centuries with scarcely an allusion to it by the writers of those times. The scantiness of historical reference, therefore, to this topic, in those early times, is no necessary evidence against the practice of the ordinance.

It is a singular and interesting fact, as we shall see, that, so soon as there is any occasion to speak on this subject, the allusions and statements are full, free, and unqualified, as if it were an ordinance received from the apostolic fathers, always approved, and generally observed. When the rite first became, by incident, a subject of controversy in the Church, even those most interested to deny its apostolical

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practice, that they might the better defend themselves in certain departures from the common faith, make no intimation that it is a rite of human invention. The first controversial opening on the subject is plenary as to the fact of the practice of the rite, leaving us to conclude that at any time during the preceding period of silence there would have been the same fulness of statement if occasion had demanded.

It may not seem needful to cite witnesses to the general prevalence of this ordinance later than A.D. 412, when Augustine opened the Pelagian controversy. Yet it is so convenient and pertinent to introduce here certain from Europe and Asia and Africa, — men eminent and of wide scholarship and influence in their day, — that it is not easy to refrain. It is the more willingly done, because it does not seem to be as well known as it should, how full of evidence on this point the early Church history is.

Let us begin, therefore, a few years later than A.D. 412, and work backward among the Christian fathers, to a point as near to the times of the apostles as we can find any one of them speaking on this subject of Infant Baptism.

Vincent of Lerins flourished as a presbyter and monk about A.D. 430, and has preserved his name by an attack on Augustine, that gave occasion for that great man to write his four books Concerning the Soul and its Origin. Vincent had his island home in the Mediterranean, a little off the coast of France, as his title indicates. We are indebted to Augustine for the words of Vincent on the baptism of infants: —

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"We must consider those infants, who, being destined to baptism in the present life, are prevented by death before they are regenerated in Christ. . . . I dare to affirm that they may obtain the forgiveness of original sin, though they may not be admitted to heaven itself: as to the confessing but not baptized thief the Lord granted not heaven, but paradise." [1]

Here Vincent advances the theory that baptism is necessary to a full salvation, the unbaptized infant prevented from the intended rite being admitted only to the intermediate state of paradise. That this is his theory is evident from his second book, where he supports his reference to the thief by the current tradition of Dinocrates, a boy of seven years, and his sister, who, being heathen children, could not obtain baptism, and so gained only paradise.[2]

We pass from Southern Europe to Mesopotamia. Theodoret, who was eminent in his work about A.D. 420, a pupil of Chrysostom, and bishop of Cyrus on the Euphrates, is said to have had there at one time the charge of eight hundred churches. He was a distinguished writer. "His learning," says Mosheim, "was great, his genius good, and his productions among the best of the age." He wrote Commentaries on the Old Testament, and on the Pauline

[1] "Habendam dicimus de infantibus istius modi rationem, qui prædestinati baptismo vitæ præsentis, antequam renascuntur in Christo, præveniuntur occiduo. . . . Ausim dicere istos pervenire posse ad originalium indulgentiam peccatorum, non tamen ut cœleste inducantur in regnum. Sicuti latroni confesso quidem, sed non baptizato, Dominus non cœlorum regnum tribuit, sed paradisum." — Apud AUGUST., *De Anima*, Lib. ii. 9, 10.

[2] Idem, Lib. i. 9, ii. 10, 12, iii. 9.

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Epistles; An Ecclesiastical History, covering the time from A.D. 320 to A.D. 427, which is a continuation of Eusebius; Five Books on the Existing Heresies; The Lives of Thirty Eminent Monks; Dialogues on the Trinity; An Apology for Christianity, in Twelve Books, besides miscellanies. He did a great work in confuting and converting the Marcionites, of whom he says he baptized ten thousand. Such a man was, of course, eminently fitted to speak on the usage of infant baptism in his times. He says, —

"Baptism is not what the foolish Messalians call it, — only a razor that cuts off past sins, which, indeed, it does. But, if it affects no more, why need we baptize infants, who are sinless?"[3]

This question of the learned Theodoret is direct and simple, and can leave no doubt in a candid mind that the rite we are considering was generally observed in his day.

That we may take the widest range of the Christian field, and gather evidence from extreme and opposite borders, to show the universality of this usage, let us pass now from the Euphrates to the Nile.

Isidore of Pelusium was active and prominent in church affairs from A.D. 388 to A.D. 431. He devoted much of his very rigid monkish life to expo-

[3] Οὐ γὰρ ὥς οἱ φρενοβλαβεῖς Μεσσαλιανοὶ νομίζουσι, ξῦρὸν μόνον μίμειται το βάπτισμα τὰς προγεγενημένας ἁφαιρουμενον ἁμαρτίας: τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκ περιουσίας χορίζεται. Εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο μόνου ἔργον ἦν τοῦ βαπτίσματος, ανθ' ὁτου τὰ βρέφη βαπτίζομεν ουδέπω της ἁμαρτίας γευσάμενα: — *Hæretic. Fabul.* Lib. v. c. xviii. De Bap.

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sitions of the Scriptures, in the form of Epistles. Of these he left over two thousand, "of great value for the history of morals and exegesis," says Guericke, in his "Ancient Church." On the baptism of Infants Isidore thus speaks: —

"You wrote me wishing to know why infants, being sinless, are baptized. It seems well for me to give you my reasons. Some, degrading the subject, say it is that they may have cleansed away that filth coming on human nature by the sin of Adam. I also think it does that; but" &c. And he goes on to show that it also imparts many gifts and graces, constituting the subject a real child of God.[4]

Jerome, who was baptized into the Church A.D. 363, and died A.D. 420, was not involved in any controversy that required him to speak of this rite; and so he refers to it but infrequently, if, indeed, more than once, and that incidentally, as he would have referred to the other sacrament common and unquestioned. In his Letter to Leta, on the education of her daughter, he has this passage: —

"He who is a child and thinks as a child, till he arrives at the age of discretion, and Pythagoras's letter Y leads him to the divided way, has both his good and evil imputed to his parents; unless, indeed, you assume that the children themselves are alone at fault, if they do not receive baptism, and that the sin is not to be charged on those who were unwilling to grant

[4] Ἐπειδή γεγραφε σου ἡ μεγαλονοια βουλομένη μαθεῖν δια την αἰτίαν τὰ βρέφη ἀναμάρτητα ὄντα βαπτίζεται, κτλ. — ISIDORI *Epistolarum*, Lib. iii. Epis. 195.

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it at that very time when those about to receive it were unable to object to it." [5]

Here the removal of the sins of infancy by baptism, according to the erring notion of the times, is clearly set forth, and is used to press parental responsibility on Leta.

These four authorities are cited,—Vincent, Theodoret, Isidore, and Jerome,— partly to show the common use of the rite in question in their day, but mainly for another purpose. The authorities about to be quoted will cover and defend the ground fully that we claim, and will show that, in the later times of these four, the usage was universal. Yet these four make only single and isolated and incidental allusions to it. The main purpose, therefore, in quoting their meagre words, is to illustrate the fact that voluminous writers among the fathers have passed over this rite, when everywhere in practice, with bare and solitary allusions only, when they had no occasion to refer to it controversially. A little earlier Augustine and Pelagius are redundant in references, because under the rite, and related to it, great doctrines were in controversy between them. By and by we shall come again to church fathers comparatively silent on infant baptism, because it is not in controversy, directly or incidentally. This fact and illustration are specially com-

[5] "Qui autem parvulus est et sapit ut parvulus, donec ad annos sapientiæ veniat, et Pythagoræ litera Y eum perducat ad bivium, tam bona ejus quam mala parentibus imputantur; nisi forté existimas Christianorum filios, si baptisma non receperint ipsos tantum reos esse peccati, et non etiam scelus referri ad eos qui dare noluerint, maxime eo tempore quo contradicere non poterant qui accepturi erant."—HIERONYMI, *Epistolæ Selectæ*, Lib. ii., Ep. 15, ad Lætam.

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mended to the consideration of those who would make so much against the existence of the rite in the early Church, from the silence of some of the church fathers. An historical argument based on historical silence may sometimes have a terrible recoil. If Capt. Cook makes no reference to sunrise in the Sandwich Islands, what is the inference?

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY, AND INFANT BAPTISM.

THE Pelagian controversy furnished the first occasion for preachers and authors and councils in the Church to speak much and positively on this subject. Allusions would of course be made incidentally; and, when any heresy or schism arose involving this sacrament, the allusions would increase. But, till the heresy of Pelagius came abroad, and disputes arose over it, there was no good cause why much should be said on this common and quiet and universal ordinance. That controversy arose in this way.

Pelagius, a British monk, being resident at Rome about A.D. 410, gave head and name to the heresy. The common doctrine of the Church at that time on original sin was, that the first sin of Adam was imputed to his entire posterity by the appointment of God, and that the effects of it were transmitted to all his race in such a way that they were born without any original righteousness, and under sentence of death, and liable to an eternal separation from God. Pelagius denied the doctrine of original sin in this sense; and with him as leaders in the denial and opposition were Cœlestius a presbyter, and Julian an Italian bishop.

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In opposition to the common doctrine, Pelagius taught that sinning in Adam did not mean contracting sin by birth in the race of Adam, but only a sin of imitation. "How can one be esteemed guilty of the sin," he says, "which he knows he did not commit? If it is not his own, it is compulsory, but if his own, voluntary; and if voluntary, it can be avoided."[1]

In his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, he says, "The transgression of Adam did not injure those not sinning, as the righteousness of Christ does not help those not trusting in him." "If baptism washes away that old sin, those born of baptized parents ought to be free from all sin; for they could not impart to their children what they did not themselves possess." Pelagius goes on to say, that, if the soul of the new-born babe is not by propagation, but creation, "it would be very unjust that a soul born to-day, and not from the stock of Adam [*non ex massâ Adæ*], should be punished for that ancient sin; and that it cannot be that God, who forgives one's own sins, should impute to him the sins of another."

In his book on Free Will, he says, "Every thing good or ill in us was not born in us, but done by us. We are born capable of becoming good or evil, but not with those qualities. By birth we are equally wanting holiness and sin." Augustine says Cœlestius taught that "the sin of Adam hurt no one but himself;" and that Julian held that "at the time of our birth our nature is rich in innocence," and that "if one be charged with guilt, the charge must lie

[1] *De Natura*, apud AUGUST.

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against his conduct, not his birth." And much more to the same import from the three Pelagian leaders.

All this was foreign to the creed of the Church, as then held; and, to defend the ancient faith against these innovations, Augustine gave himself up, and for twenty years was engaged in the struggle. Indeed, he died in the full armor of battle, A.D. 430.

In opposing these views, Augustine urged many points with his great and varied ability; but we are concerned now with only one line of his argument. Nor is it a question now with us who was right, on the doctrine of original sin; nor yet whether the design and office of baptism were Scripturally apprehended. Pelagius agreed fully with the Church in the practice of infant baptism; but denied original sin, which, in the Church view, baptism was supposed to wash away. This discrepancy Augustine pressed on him energetically; and it is in the attack and defence at this point that the Pelagian controversy throws so much light on the question we are investigating. In making quotations from the parties in dispute, we shall so mingle them chronologically as will in the best and briefest way show the mind of the Church on our subject at that period, A.D. 410–430.

It was A.D. 412 that Augustine wrote a book, the aim of which was to show that infants lie under the guilt of original sin. Among the proofs, he cites their baptism. To the objection that they are baptized, not for the washing away of sin, but that they may be made heirs of heaven, he replies, —

"If they be questioned whether unbaptized infants, and not yet members of the kingdom, come to an

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eternal salvation in the resurrection of the just, they labor severely, but find no escape. For what Christian can bear the saying that any one can enter into eternal salvation who has not been regenerated in Christ, which He has willed to be done by baptism?"[2]

Being sternly pressed for a reason for baptizing infants, if not guilty of original sin, some of the Pelagians ventured to give the heathen notion of preexistence, and that for sins committed there they are now baptized. If Pelagius could have denied the apostolical authority of the ordinance, would he not sooner have done it, than resort to so strange and forlorn a reason? This desperate plunge for relief shows us how this rite bore as a proof of the doctrine of original sin. Nothing urged against Pelagius, for denying this doctrine, gave him so much trouble in reply as the common use of baptism. If it had been possible, how soon would he have broken the very centre of opposition, by showing that the rite was an innovation and corruption in the Church! But though so tempted to make this denial of its origin, and so well read in the history of the Church through the three centuries between him and the apostles, he did not do it. His knowledge of Church history, and of the use of the rite, evidently prevented him. Augustine sees the dilemma of his opponents, and avails himself of it vigorously.

"Moreover, because they concede that infants must

[2] "Quis enim Christianorum ferat, cum dicitur ad æternam salutem posse quemquam pervenire, si non renascatur in Christo, quod per baptismum fieri voluit?"—*De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione*, Lib. i., c. xviii.

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be baptized, since they cannot resist the authority of the Church universal, no doubt derived from the Lord and apostles," &c.[3]

And in this same treatise, concerning The Guilt and Forgiveness of Sins, he makes still more and weighty declarations: "The entire Church has, from ancient times, firmly held that the infants of believers do secure the pardon of original sin by the baptism of Christ."[4]

"I do not remember to have heard any thing to the contrary from Christians who receive either Testament, in the catholic Church or in any heresy or schism. I do not remember to have read any thing to the contrary among those writing on these subjects, whom I have examined, — writers who have followed the canonical Scriptures, or believed they should be followed, or wished them to be believed."[5]

These are very weighty sayings. He had never met a Christian, catholic or heretic, nor read any author, who thought otherwise than that the infants of believers are baptized for the forgiveness of sin. He says this who was as well fitted, probably, as any man, living then or since, to speak of the doctrines and

[3] "Porro quid parvulos baptizandos esse concedunt, qui contra auctoritatem universæ ecclesiæ, procul dubio per Dominum et apostolos traditam, venire non possunt," &c. — *Do.*, Lib. i., c. xxvi.

[4] "Antiquitus universa ecclesia retineret, fideles parvulos originalis peccati remissionem per Christi baptismum consecutos." — Lib. iii., 4.

[5] "Non memini me aliud audivisse a Christianis, qui utrumque accipiunt Testamentum, non solum in catholica ecclesia, verum etiam in qualibet hæresi vel schismate constitutis: non memini me aliud legisse apud eos, quos de his rebus aliquid scribentes legere potui, qui Scripturas canonicas sequerentur, vel sequi se crederent, credive voluissent." — Lib. iii., 6.

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customs of the Church in the three centuries between him and the apostles.

Augustine continues his argument, following Pelagius into that middle state, *limbus puerorum*, where the latter felt constrained to locate children who died unbaptized, and from which only baptism could keep them. This state and place was paradise, but not heaven. Augustine says, —

"Suppose an infant. If he be with Christ already, why baptize him? If he be baptized, that he may be with Christ, which is the fact, then it is evident that he is not with Christ before he is baptized." [6]

Near the close of A.D. 415, a council of fourteen bishops, held at Diospolis, brought Pelagius to trial, on several charges. Among them, he was accused of believing "that infants unbaptized may have eternal life." This tenet he rejected, and agreed, though equivocally, with the bishops in the formula, "that unbaptized infants will not only fail of the kingdom of heaven, but of eternal life also." [7]

And so Pelagius gave up not only his theory of infant salvation without baptism, but also that supplemental or relief theory of a middle place for those who had missed of baptism. This was a great concession for him; for, as the baptism of infants was

[6] "Constitue igitur quemlibet parvulum: si jam cum Christo est, utquid baptizatur? Si autem, quod habet veritas, ideo baptizatur, ut sit cum Christo, adversus Christum est, profecto non baptizatus non est cum Christo." — Lib. i., c. xxviii.

[7] "Infantes, etiam si non baptizentur, habere vitam æternam. . . . Infantes non baptizati, non solum regnum cœlorum, verum etiam vitam æternam habere non possint." — AUGUSTI., *Epis. ad Paulinum*, clxxxvi., alias cvi.

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then held to wash away original sin, he virtually conceded that they had it, by agreeing with the council that the unbaptized could not be saved. He also abandoned his favorite theory of the third state, — that is, neither salvation nor perdition.

Pressed to so great renunciations, we may well suppose that, if it had been a possible thing for him, in the face of the practice, traditions, and historical light of that age, to declare infant baptism to be a merely human rite, and foisted into the Church, he would most certainly have done so. Such a thought seems to have been wholly foreign from the accused and accusers. This shows how deeply and thoroughly the ordinance was then imbedded in the history of the Church, only about three hundred years from the living teaching of the apostles themselves. That lapse of time would allow for the germinating and growth and adoption of a new doctrine, as it evidently had in their common belief in baptismal regeneration. But a new article of faith is a quiet, unseen, mental growth, that may mature in a brief time; while a rite, and specially a sacrament, like this one, is visible, public, — a thing for the congregation to see, and for the families to study and use in their most tender and interested relations. To dupe the whole Church, in that space of time, by the forgery, and leave no trace or clew to it, that a man like Pelagius could find, — scholarly, keen, and pushed vigorously to his defence as a heretic, — is a presumption that very few historical scholars would undertake to defend.

More than this: the time between the council of

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Diospolis and the apostles must be divided, on the opposing theory of forgery and corruption, between two forgeries or corruptions. First, the rite of infant baptism must have been invented, popularized, and made authoritative; and then it must have been perverted, to carry the second forgery or corruption of baptismal regeneration as the antidote of original sin. And these two impositions must have come tandem, and not abreast, on the Church, and both within those three centuries. It would have been a great deliverance for Pelagius if he could have shown any traces of the innovations as departures from the earlier usage. But he not only does not do this: he affirms his faith in the rite, as of divine authority, in a letter to Innocent, bishop of Rome. The letter is preserved only in the quotations of Augustine, who reports him as saying, —

"He was defamed by men who said he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promised the kingdom of heaven to some without the redemption of Christ. . . . He never had heard even an impious heretic say what he was accused of saying concerning infants. . . . Who is so wicked as to keep infants from the kingdom of heaven, while he forbids their being baptized and regenerated in Christ?" [8]

Cœlestius makes a similar confession in his creed:

[8] "Se ab hominibus infamari quod neget parvulis baptismi sacramentum, et absque redemptione Christi aliquibus cœlorum regna promittat. . . . Nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse, qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis, diceret. . . . Deinde quis tam impius, qui parvulos exsortes regni cœlorum esse velit, dudum eos baptizari et in Christo renasci vetat?" — Apud August., *De Pecc. Orig.*, §§ 19, 20.

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"That infants ought to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, according to the rule of the universal Church and the teaching of the gospel, we confess." [9]

Julian, the other triumvir in this Pelagian defection, is quite as positive as either of the others. "So far from denying that it is useful to those of all ages, we pronounce an eternal anathema on all who say it is not necessary, even for infants." [10]

The action of three councils on the Pelagian heresy should be stated, because it expresses the opinion of large bodies of men, that represented a wide extent of country.

In the year of our Lord 416, a council of sixty-eight bishops was convened at Carthage; and in giving an account of their doings, in a letter to Innocent, bishop of Rome, they say, "Whoever denies that infants are delivered from perdition and obtain eternal salvation by the baptism of Christ, — let him be accursed." [11]

In the same year a council of sixty-one bishops convened at Milevis for the province of Numidia. In their letter to Innocent, they inform him of their deliberations concerning those who held that "the sacrament of Christian grace does not profit infants." In his reply Innocent, speaking of the notion of Pelagius,

[9] "Quanquam per baptismum Christi etiam parvulorum fieri redemptionem, libello suo Cœlestius in Carthaginiensi ecclesia jam confessus est." — AUGUST. *Opera*, Tom. x. 2336. Ed. Paris, 1838.

[10] Apud AUGUST.

[11] "Quicumque neget parvulos per baptismum Christi a perditione liberari, et salutem percipere sempiternam, anathema sit." — AUGUST. *Epis. ad Innocentium*, clxxv., alias xc.

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that infants may be saved without baptism, calls it *perfatuum*, very absurd. [12]

Another and larger council was held at Carthage, A.D. 418, numbering two hundred and fourteen bishops. As declaring against one of the errors of Pelagius, they say, —

"Infants, who have as yet not been able to commit any sins in their own persons, are truly baptized for the forgiveness of sins, that they may be cleansed by regeneration from that which they contracted by generation." [13]

The historical survey now made takes us back toward the apostles to A.D. 410, and covers the ground between A.D. 410 and A.D. 430. By a widely gathered and varied accumulation of testimony, the practice of infant baptism at that time is made evident. Before leaving this section of our argument, certain things should be said relative to the evidence.

From the days of the apostles no occasion had arisen to call out and put on record the facts concerning the acceptance and use of this ordinance, if in use, till the Pelagian controversy agitated the Church. But so soon as this arose, and gave occasion to bring up the practice of the Church, the testimony to a general use of this ordinance comes up from all parts of the Christian field, and in great abundance.

[12] "Illud vero quod eos vestra fraternitas asserit prædicare, parvulos æternæ vitæ præmiis etiam sine baptismatis gratia posse donari, perfatuum est" — AUGUST., *Epis.* clxxxii. alias xciii.

[13] "Parvuli, qui nihil peccatorum in seipsis adhuc committere potuerunt, ideo in peccatorum remissionem veraciter baptizantur, ut in eis regeneratione mundetur quod generatione traxerant." — *Concil. Carth.*, An. 418, Can. Sec.

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The entire Church is full of evidence to the fact that infant baptism was universal usage, and unquestioned as to its apostolical origin. Southern Europe, Northern Africa, Asia Minor, and the Holy Land had but one voice in the matter. If, then, the rite had been a human invention, and introduced into the Church after the days of the apostles,— three hundred years only,— it must have gone everywhere with the Church, and imposed on it in its most remote sections, and with a strange thoroughness.

It is to be noted, too, that the leaders in the Pelagian heresy were deeply interested to show that infant baptism was a human ordinance, foisted into the Church. No modern sectary can have so good reason for disproving its divine institution. For no argument bore so heavily against them, as the proof of original sin from the use of this rite in the Church to wash it away. They resorted to many and varied and even absurd reasons for its practice. Some said infants were not baptized for forgiveness. Others said the form of forgiveness was observed in the ritual, not that infants had sins, but that there might not be two forms of baptism. Some said the formula merely expressed forgiveness for any who might have sins to be forgiven. Others still said that in baptism the sins of a pre-existing state were forgiven.

In such extremities to account for this practice, what a relief would it have been, if they could have pointed to any Church or sect, within three hundred years, who had denied, disowned, and disregarded the institution! But, instead of discovering and using any such comfortable fact, Cœlestus admits infant baptism

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to be "the rule of the universal Church;" and Pelagius says that "he never had heard even any impious heretic or sectary deny it." If it had been of human origin these two men were the scholars to discover it. For they were born and bred for public life; and they spent many of their best years at Rome, the very ear of the Church universal, for both facts and rumors. They had both travelled extensively, and spent much time in Northern Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Southern Europe. Yet they never relieve themselves, in the most difficult part of their defence, by any intimation that the rite could prove nothing because it had no Scripture warrant, or was disregarded by some of the ancient churches.

It must be noted, too, that this Pelagian question was discussed and disposed of by seven councils and synods before the death of its originator, namely: at Carthage, A.D. 412; at Jerusalem, A.D. 415; at Diospolis, A.D. 415; at Mileve and Carthage, A.D. 416; at Carthage, A.D. 417, and again A.D. 418.[14] Yet, in all the controversy attending these convocations, in their sessions, and among the churches, no discovery is made in the tradition or usage of any church, that infant baptism was said by any one to be an innova-

[14] The acts of these councils, Carthage, A.D. 412 and 417, are extant only so far as quoted by Augustine and others. The latter appears to have acted on our subject only so far as to dissent from the opinion of Zozimus, the Roman bishop, that he had given in favor of Pelagius and Cœlestius. The former charged Cœlestius with denying original sin; and he defended himself by saying, that, whatever he might think of the sins of infants, he believed in their baptism: Wall, 1:89. Seventeen other councils or synods took action on the Pelagian heresies, after the death, or rather disappearance from history, of Pelagius. The date of his death is unknown.

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tion, and so of useless reference. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive how the ordinance, as a human invention, could have taken a universal and unquestioned place in the Church within so short a time of the apostles, and no trace of its introduction, and no remonstrance against its use, and no Church disregarding it, be left for the searching eye of those who were so deeply interested to find such a fact.

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CHAPTER XXII.

AUGUSTINE ON INFANT BAPTISM.

THE historical gleaning that we have made for our purpose out of the Pelagian controversy, covering a period of twenty years, gives a prominence, of necessity, to Augustine. He appears in this baptismal arena A.D. 412. But he was then in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and had been in the Church twenty-five years, and an ardent scholar forty years. Before he came to this controversy he had written and published extensively on Church questions, and is, therefore, a most important witness to be detained and still further examined in this case. But, while we hunt up more evidence in his earlier writings, we shall do well to regard what he says to Jerome in a letter written near the close of the Pelagian struggle. In his work on Free Will, written forty years before, he has made brief allusion to infant baptism, so brief, and therefore inexplicit, that the Pelagians were able to turn it for their side. Of what he wrote, and its perversion, he thus speaks: —

"In that work I said some things concerning the baptism of infants, not largely, but as much as seemed needful for that book [*non sufficienter, sed quantum illi operi satis videbatur*], that it helps those even

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who are not sensible of it, and are as yet without personal faith. I did not think it necessary then to speak of the condemnation of infants who die without it, because the controversy now pending was not then agitated" [*quia non quod nunc agitur agebatur*].[1]

It is disputed questions and innovations that make their full record in the writings of the times, while conceded truths and common customs get but incidental and wayside allusions; and therefore a lean, bald reference to a usage is conclusive that it has age and fixedness.

Let us proceed to gather in, at this stage in our investigations backward, some allusions and declarations of Augustine concerning infant baptism, that he made in his writings during his twenty-five Christian years preceding his disputes with Pelagius.

The quotation we first introduce is from a letter to Jerome, in which the origin of the soul is in discussion. Augnstine wavers between the two theories of propagation and of creation, and says, —

"Before I can decide which theory must be taken, I deliberately say this: that the true one cannot be opposed to the most firm and well-grounded tenet by which the Church holds that the new-born children of human kind cannot be freed from condemnation except through the grace of the name of Christ, which he has commended in his sacraments."[2]

[1] AUGUST., *Epist. ad Hierony*, clxvi. *alias* xxviii.

[2] Antequam sciam quænam earum potius eligenda sit, hoc me non temere sentire profiteor, eam quæ vera est non adversari robustissimæ ac fundatissimæ fidei, qua Christi ecclesia nec parvulos homines recentissime natos a damnatione credit, nisi per gratiam nominis Christi quam in suis sacramentis commendavit, posse liberari. — AUGUST., *Epist.*, clvi. *alias* xxviii.

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Any one familiar with the synonyms and terminology of Augustine, when speaking of baptism, will not hesitate as to what he means by *gratiam nominis Christi*. How very firmly established in the Church this ordinance was when he wrote this epistle, the two superlatives indicate, — *robustissimæ ac fundatissimæ*.

Another passage in the same letter is equally expressive: —

"Whoever says that infants shall be made alive in Christ, that die without receiving this sacrament, both denies the apostolic doctrine and condemns the entire Church [*totam condemnat ecclesiam*], in which men hurry and run with their little ones to be baptized."[8]

The next extract about to be made is more weighty for our purpose, because written several years earlier, and in confutation of schismatics who date from A.D. 312.

The sect of the Donatists originated in a secession of seventy Numidian bishops or pastors from the African Church, on account of alleged irregularities and corruptions in it, and became so large as, at one time, to number more than four hundred pastors. They refused to fellowship the mother Church, and even denied the validity of its ordinations and sacraments, and re-baptized those who came from it

[8] Quisquis dixerit quod in Christo vivificabuntur etiam parvuli qui sine sacramenti ejus participatione de vita exeunt, hic profecto et contra apostolicam prædicationem venit, et totam condemnat ecclesiam, ubi propterea cum baptizandis parvulis festinatur et curritur. — *Ibidem.*

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to them. In A.D. 400 Augustine wrote his De Baptismo Contra Donatistas, and in it argues the impiety of re-baptizing. He affirms that an impure and heretical church administering, and a wicked man receiving it, cannot make the ordinance invalid in that case. He proves this by citing the case of those baptized in youth, and who afterwards were led away by error or sinful feelings. They grew up into a better knowledge and moral state, but did not reject their baptism, as if made worthless by their unworthy condition when receiving it. He then appeals to the practice of the Church to sustain his position.

"If any one demands divine authority for this thing, we can very well show what the sacrament of baptism avails for infants from the circumcision that a former people received; though what the whole Church practises, and was not instituted by councils, but was always held, may most justly be believed to be handed down by apostolic authority."[4]

Here is a schismatic Church, correct in faith, but defective in polity, of a hundred years' standing in its schism and irregularities; and Augustine, in his argument to recover them, appeals to their practice of infant baptism. The appeal carries this usage back, as unquestioned, a century nearer to the apostles than the Pelagian controversy found it. But let it be noted that the point in the quotation and

[4] "Et si quisquam in hac re divinam auctoritatem quærat (quanquam quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur); tamen veraciter conjicere possumus quid valeat in parvulis baptismi sacramentum ex circumcisione carnis quam prior populus accepit." — Lib. iv. c. 24.

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reference is not authority for the rite of baptism, but authority for its validity and perpetuity when once properly administered. The argument of Augustine is not for baptizing infants, but against re-baptizing any one, affirming that the church has never done it; and in this affirmation he incidentally, and so the more powerfully for our argument, mentions infant baptism, as practised in that seceding church.

Augustine seldom, if ever, argues for the apostolic authority of this sacrament for infants. He implies or affirms the fact, as not needing argument. So in his work on Genesis, one of his earliest writings, he says, —

"The custom of the mother Church in baptizing infants must by no means be slighted or esteemed useless, or thought to be any thing else than an apostolic tradition." [5]

No declaration of opinion could be clearer or stronger: yet this is not the language of ardent and sharp controversy, after he had been twenty years in the Pelagian conflict. It is the cool, scholarly declaration of his early Christian life, incidentally made, while inquiring which of the two theories of the origin of the soul is correct. In concluding his remarks on that question, he says, that, let the soul of the infant originate as it may, the sanctifying waters of its baptism must not be omitted.

The language is not stronger or more positive that

[5] "Consuetudo matris ecclesiæ in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam spernanda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda, nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esse traditio." — *De Genesi*, Lib. x. c. 23.

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he uses in a sermon preached and published against the Pelagians many years afterward, and in all the warmth of that heated controversy. Then he says of the ordinance of infant baptism and its power, —

"This the Church has always had, always held: this it received from the creed of the fathers; this it guards perseveringly even to the end." [6]

Here we take our leave of this eminent Church father, doubly grateful to him, first, that he has made the field of our inquiry so luminous with evidence from A.D. 430 to A.D. 412, in his debates with the Pelagians; and secondly, that, in his efforts to reform the Donatists and others, he has set beacon lights along our path one hundred years farther back towards the apostles, to A.D. 312, when that schismatic body took organization.

[6] "Hoc ecclesia semper habuit, semper tenuit; hoc a majorum fide percepit, hoc usque in finem perseveranter custodit." — *Sermo* x. De Verbis Apostoli.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

INNOCENT AND CHRYSOSTOM.

WE have been traversing the primitive formations of polemic theology, yet only to obtain what has been incidentally preserved in those old strata. Others explore those mountain ranges to quarry stone for the private theological houses and party breastworks of to-day. We only skirt the bold sides and quiet valleys, seeking the little fossil footprints of the children of Zion. So far our search has been abundantly repaid. The alluvium of time has carelessly covered, yet most faithfully preserved in their minutest delineations, the infantile impressions that we seek. So on cabinet slates of old red sandstone you will see first the huge tracks of pre-Adamic monsters; but among and between them, and half trampled out of sight, the delicate imprints of little birds and insects. Let us now proceed to remove other layers, and uncover deeper strata, to see what may be seen.

Innocent, the first of that name in the episcopal chair at Rome, was elevated to that honor A.D. 402. He wrote several epistles in which infant baptism is mentioned. Decentius, a bishop, had written to Innocent, inquiring whether any one but a bishop

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could bestow the chrism or anointing to a baptized infant. Innocent replies as follows: —

"Concerning the anointing of the foreheads of infants, it surely cannot be done except by a bishop. . . . The presbyters, when they baptize in the presence or absence of the bishop, may properly anoint the baptized, if the chrism has been prepared by the bishop; but it is not proper for them to anoint the forehead with the same, which service belongs to the bishops alone." [1]

Again, in a letter to a synod at Toledo, on qualifications for entering the ministry, he says, —

"A certain law declares that particular ones only may be elected into the clerical order, — to wit, those who were baptized in infancy." [2]

He here speaks of those little observances that pertain to an old custom, and that, by their very antiquity, have become rules and regulations. Formalism in non-essentials is of slow growth, and the accretion of time; and the small items mentioned in these two extracts are evidence that this rite had long been in use, and that law had sprung up out of mere habits in it.

Chrysostom is not without testimony on this subject. Though not a topic inviting his oratorical

[1] "De consignandis vero infantibus, manifestum est non ab altero quam episcopo fieri licere. . . . Presbyteris seu extra episcopum, seu presente episcopo cum baptizant, chrismate baptizatos ungere licet, sed quod ab episcopo fuerit consecratum; non tamen fontem ex eodem oleo signare, quod solis debetur episcopis." — *Ad Decenti.*, Can. 3.

[2] "Qui ab ineunte ætate baptizati fuerint." — *Ad. Syn. Tolet.* Can. 5.

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powers, and one in which he was no way involved by controversy, it yet so lay at the very door of the Church, that it gained some wayside notices from him.

He wrote a homily, Ad Baptizatos (To the Baptized), not now extant in Greek, but quoted by Julian and Augustine. One passage cited by Julian against Augustine to prove that Chrysostom rejected the doctrine of original sin, as commonly held then by the Church, is as follows: —

"You see that baptism has many benefits, while some think this grace of heaven brings only forgiveness of sins. I have stated ten benefits from it. We baptize infants for this reason, that, though not polluted by any sin, they may thus obtain sanctity, righteousness, adoption, the inheritance and fellowship of Christ." [8]

On baptism, as compared with circumcision, we have his own words as follows: —

"Our circumcision — I speak of that of baptism — has pleasure without suffering and healing, is the minister of a thousand benefits, and fills us with the blessing of the Spirit. Nor has it any determinate time, as the other; but one in immature age and in

[8] "Vides quot sunt baptismatis largitates: et nonnulli deputant cœlestem gratiam in peccatorum tantum remissione consistere; nos autem honores computavimus decem. Hac de causa etiam infantes baptizamus, cum non sint coinquinati peccato, ut eis addatur sanctitas, justitia, adoptio, hæreditas, fraternitas Christi, ut ejus membra sint." — AUGUST., *contra Jul.*, Lib. i. 21.

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middle life and in old age may receive this circumcision that is without hands."[4]

The application of this passage to infants turns somewhat on the meaning of *ἀώρῳ*, which, in the preceding homily, Chrysostom uses in describing the infant when receiving circumcision. "The new-born child, who cannot then understand what is being done," &c. *τὸ γάρ ἄωρον παιδίον, κ.τ.λ.*

In another place he bewails the carelessness of those who have received baptism, but make little or no spiritual use of it.

"The catechumens, so regarding it, pay no attention to a godly life; and those who have been enlightened [baptized], some of them being children when they received it, and some in sickness and long delaying, have no desire to live for God," &c.[5]

Chrysostom here laments over the same neglect that we see and lament, in those who were dedicated in their infancy to God, and yet take no spiritual and practical views of their relations to God and his Church, in consequence of that dedication.

He had those in his Church who had not thrown off all the heathen superstitions of their unconverted

[4] *ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα περιτομὴ, ἡ τοῦ βαπτίσματος, λέγω, χὰρις ἀνώδυνον ἔχει τὴν ἰατρείαν καὶ μυρίων ἀγαθῶν πρὸξενος γίνεται ἡμῖν, καὶ τῆς τοῦ* Πνεύματος *ἡμᾶς ἐμπίπλησι χάριτος. Καὶ ὀυγὲ ὡρισμένον ἔχει καιρὸν καθαπερ ἐκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἔξεστι καὶ ἐν ἀώρῳ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ ἐν μέσῃ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ γήρα γενόμενήν τινα ταύτην δέξασθαι τὴν ἀχειροποίητον περειτομὴν.*—*Hom.* xl., in Genesin.

[5] *Οἱ μὲν οὖν κατηχούμενοι τουτο σπουδάξοντες ὐυδεμίαν ποιοῦνται ἐπιμέλειαν ορθοὺ βίου. Οἱ δὲ ἤδη φωτισθέντες,*[1] *οἱ μὲν ἐπεὶ παῖδες ὄντες τοῦτο ἔλαβον. κ. τ. λ.*—*Hom.* xxiii., in Acta. Apost.

[1] Φωτίζω is a common synonym with the Greek Fathers for *βαπτίζω*.

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state. Some of these were accustomed to anoint the foreheads of their babes with a magical preparation, as a safeguard or charm against witches. He exhorts them against the pagan ceremony after this manner: —

"Defiling his child thus, does he not see that he makes it disgusting? How can he bring it to the hands of the minister? Tell me, how can you think it fitting for the seal to be placed on its forehead by the hand of the presbyter, when you have polluted it?"[6]

No one will fail to perceive the reference here to the rite of infant consecration. No other early usage in the Church fills out the allusion.

These extracts from Chrysostom, if left standing thus solitary, would not serve the ends of historic justice in this discussion. The patriarch of Constantinople, and his relations to the times, should be regarded.

Chrysostom was born about A.D. 347, at Antioch; ordained deacon A.D. 381, and presbyter A.D. 386, and Patriarch of Constantinople A.D. 387. Early devoting himself to Christ and the Church, he was a monk, an eremite, and an earnest, distinguished scholar; and commenced authorship at the age of twenty-six, A.D. 373, dying at the age of sixty. Few names have been so eminent in the Eastern Church. His knowledge, as his influence, was very

[6] Ὁ βορβόρῳ χρίων πῶς ὑγιὲ καὶ βδελυκτὸν ποιεῖ τὸ παιδίον; Πῶς γὰρ ἀυτὸ προσάγει ταῖς χερσὶ τοῦ ἱερέως; Εἰπέ μοι, πῶς ἀξιος ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου σφραγιδα ἐπιτεθῆναι παρὰ της τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου χειρὸς ἐνθα τὸν βόρβορον ἐπέχρισας.— *Hom.* xii., in 1 Epis. ad Corinthos.

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extensive; and, as a legacy to the Christian Church, he left more than twelve hundred sermons, homilies, and exegetical discourses, and two hundred and fifty epistles, besides a miscellany of tracts.

Such a man could not speak as he does of infant baptism, if it were a novelty, or had only a partial and equivocal place among the rites of the Church.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

FOUR COUNCILS, AND SIRICIUS.

WE pass now from one witness to many, from a man to a council. In those early and barbarous times, when Christianity was working its way into the kingdom of darkness by slow and perilous steps, Christian villages and families were subject to raids from the heathen, for pillage and capture and slaughter. In these incursions it often happened, as on our Indian frontier, that children were carried off by the pagans, and in after years would be re-captured or ransomed. So it was in Northern Africa, in the times to which we have now come in our backward movement.

Little ones so seized and carried off had been redeemed by the Mauritanian Christians. But, when brought back, they had so outgrown the memories of their childhood and of their early friends, as to be unable to tell whether they had been baptized or not. Then the question arose, whether they should be baptized at the hazard of a re-baptism, or not be baptized at the hazard of never being baptized. The case of such was submitted to the fifth Council of Carthage, A.D. 400; and they gave judgment as found in their Sixth Canon: —

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"As to those infants concerning whom no witnesses can be found who are able to testify beyond a doubt that they have been baptized, and who themselves cannot answer, on account of age, whether the sacraments have been administered to them, it is resolved that they may be baptized without any scruple, lest that scruple deprive them of the purification of the sacraments. For our Mauritanian brethren have come to us with this question," &c.[1]

It will be seen at a glance, that this rite must at that time have been owned and unquestioned in the African Church, or this double solicitude could not have been raised and brought to the deliberation and decision of a council; for there was the fear that the persons might fail of baptism wholly by its being now withheld, and the fear of repetition if now administered, — of both which errors the Church then had a dread.

The third council of Carthage, A.D. 397, was called to view this question of infant baptism from another standpoint; but their testimony is to the same point for us, only the better for its variations. We have already spoken of the origin of the sect of the Donatists, and their notions. About the time of this council that party was breaking up, and showing a willingness to come back into the mother Church. It was therefore debated in this council, whether any returning from that schism should be admitted to

[1] Placuit de infantibus quoties non inveniuntur certissimi testes qui eos baptizatos esse sine dubitatione testentur, neque ipsi sunt per ætatem idonei de traditis sibi sacramentis respondere, absque ullo scrupulo eos esse baptizandos; ne ista trepidatio eos faciat sacramentorum purgatione privari. Hinc enim legati Maurorum fratres nostri, &c. — LABBEI, *Concil. Carthag. Quint.*

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office in the Church. There was a division of the question for answer. It was agreed that those who went over to the Donatists, and were re-baptized by them, might return to the Catholic Church, but only to the rank of laymen. As to those born among the Donatists, and baptized among them in infancy, the council agreed to ask advice of two bishops outside the region of the schism, and so more likely to be unbiased by local prejudices. They selected Simplicianus, Bishop of Milan, and Siricius, Bishop of Rome. The request for judgment is made in Canon 48 of this council: —

"As to the Donatists, it is resolved that we will consult our brother bishops Siricius and Simplicianus, concerning the infants only who were baptized among them, — whether that which they did without their own consent shall hinder them, as the error of their parents, from ministration in sacred things, when, with a proper feeling, they may be turned again to the Church of God." [2]

It would seem that these two referees judged that infants so baptized might be office-bearers afterward in the true Church. At least, a council at Carthage, four years afterward, affirmed this point without doubt or reference. This evidence is auxiliary to what we have before had, showing that this schismatic Church, originating A.D. 312, had infant baptism as

[2] De Donatistis, placuit ut consulamus fratres et consacerdotes nostros, Siricium et Simplicianum, de solis infantibus qui baptizantur penes eosdem, ne quod suo non fecerunt judicio, cum ad ecclesiam Dei salubri proposito fuerint conversi, parentum illos error impediat, ne provehantur sacri altaris ministri. — LABBEI, *Concil. Carthag. Tert.*, Can. xlviii.

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one of its rites. Had the mother Church or her wayward African child originated this rite, or admitted it as a novelty during this period of separation, — almost a century, — there must have been some intimations, affirmations, or denials about it, when, in those two councils, and in the reference of the question to two foreign bishops, they were agitating so delicate and important a point, and were making the holding of office in the Church to turn on it. It must be conceded, in view of these facts, that the rite of infant baptism was common in the Church as early at least as A.D. 312.

The question raised and decided in the fifth council of Carthage, A.D. 400, was also discussed in the council of Hippo Regius, A.D. 393. This Numidian council is the one that established the canon of Scripture in its full and final integrity. These bishops decided, that, where there was no certain proof that a person had been baptized in infancy, the rite might be administered. But their judgment and advice seem to have been somewhat neglected; for, in a synodical letter of A.D. 397, it is implied that a complaint for neglect had come before them; and they enjoin action in this breviat: "Concerning those who have no sure evidence that they have been baptized, let them be baptized."[8]

Let us now continue our approach nine years nearer to the times of the apostles, and take the testimony from Siricius at the time of his induction as

[8] De his qui nullo testimonio se baptizatos noverunt ut baptizentur. — *Centuriæ Magdeburg.* Cent. iv. c. 9.

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Bishop of Rome, A.D. 384. When he entered this office he found there an unanswered letter from Himerius, bishop of Aragon. In this letter he is informed that in Spain they had been accustomed to baptize on almost any occasion of a general religious gathering. To this Siricius objects, in his reply, with a decided dissatisfaction, and says that Pentecost and Easter are the only proper occasions for baptism, with specified exceptions, as thus: —

"As to infants, who, from their age, are not yet able to speak [make confessions and renunciations], and others who from any necessity may be in immediate need of the sacred water of baptism, he would hasten to their relief, lest it turn to our ruin if the saving water be denied to them needing, and any one of them should die losing the kingdom and life. If one is in danger from shipwreck, or the attack of an enemy, or siege, or if any dangerous sickness come on one and he desire this aid of our faith, let him have the gifts of regeneration in the very moment when he asks for them." [4]

Siricius furnishes us with another item of weight in the same letter, where he is upbraiding the Spanish bishops for inducting into the ministry those who had been but recently converted to Christianity.

"He who dedicates himself to the services of the Church should have been baptized in his infancy, be-

[4] Ita infantibus qui necdum loqui potuerint per ætatem, vel his quibus in qualibet necessitate opus fuerit sacra unda baptismatis, omni volumus celeritate succurri, ne ad nostrarum perniciem tendat animarum, si negato desiderantibus fonte salutari, exiens unusquisque de seculo et regnum perdat et vitam. — SIRICI. *Episcop. Decret.* Epist. Prima, c. 2.

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fore the years of youth, and been accustomed to the duties of the readers." [5]

In these several passages just now cited, in which either councils or individuals make reference to this ordinance, many minor points and side issues are brought out. The questions are raised: Who may apply the chrism that accompanies baptism; what graces are conferred by it; whether its administration is confined to any particular time; neglect of its obligations is rebuked, and heathen defilement of the babe's forehead before baptism; whether those may receive the ordinance who are uncertain as to a prior baptism; whether valid, if administered by heretics and schismatics; whether those so baptized may enter the ministry; whether the time of administration may be hastened in case of mortal peril; and whether one may enter on the sacred offices of the Church who was not baptized in infancy.

These questions were discussed and answered, in places wide asunder, as in Spain, Italy, Africa, and Asia Minor. It is difficult to conceive of such a general and varied discussion of the same thing, unless the rite were at the same time general in the Church. It could not have been isolated and rare cases, that led to this wide expression of views, as if it were then beginning stealthily to intrude itself among the appointments of God for his house. It was an ordinance not only at home in some regions and Churches, but it was at home everywhere in the Church. And

[5] Quicumque igitur se ecclesiæ vovet obsequiis, a sua infantia ante pubertatis annos baptizari, et lectorum debet ministerio sociari. — *Ibidem*, c. 9.

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it had evidently been so, for so long a time, that neither the memory of man, nor the record of council, nor the writings extant of any author, run back to the contrary. It is also difficult to conceive of such a discussion over issues trivially related to the main point and rite itself, within three hundred years of the apostles, and no intimation be made by any one of the variously related and often excited parties, that it was a human ordinance, of which the apostles had no knowledge, and that therefore it was a non-essential to Church order. In the conflicts of opinion concerning doctrines and rights and duties related to this ordinance, and in the necessary study for the authority of precedents, stimulated often by intense partisan feelings, how is it possible, if the rite were not apostolic, that its invention, and intrusion into the Church should not be discovered and declared?

While no one before the times of Pelagius was as much interested as he to deny or disprove the apostolic origin of the sacrament, many were so deeply involved in issues related to it, that they could have eased off the force of many an argument, and hushed the scruples of conscience many times, if they could only have known and felt and said that Infant Baptism came into the Church after the apostles had left the world. But, so far as our survey has extended, history gave them no warrant for such an assumption: no one made it.

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CHAPTER XXV.

AMBROSE OF MILAN, BASIL, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, AND OPTATUS.

IN continuing our inquiries on the practice of Infant Baptism in the times immediately following the age of the apostles, we come next to Ambrose of Milan. This step carries us ten years nearer to the apostles, as Siricius, our last authority, was made bishop A.D. 384, and Ambrose A.D. 374. He was an evangelical, devout, energetic, and scholarly man in the Church. Though in the Latin branch of it, he read the Greek fathers, mingled freely in the controversies of the times, and wrote extensively, twenty volumes at least, besides ninety tractates, or letters so called. As our topic was not then in dispute, we find in the writings of this father only wayside allusions to it, whose power, of course, is inversely as their direct and polemic character.

In his commentary on St. Luke, he traces a resemblance between John the Baptist and Elias, while remarking on the words, "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." In tracing the parallelism he says, that they were both in the desert; both fed on coarse food, — one locusts, and the other what the ravens furnished; both rebuked kings, — the

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one Ahab, and the other Herod; and after other points in the comparision, he says, "The one turned back Jordan, the other turned men to the waters of salvation." [1]

He then continues his remarks on the miracle of Elias in dividing Jordan after this manner: "Perhaps this may appear to be fulfilled in our day and in that of the apostles. For that flowing of the waters back to the source of the river, in the division of it by Elias (as the Scripture says, Jordan was turned back), signified the sacrament of the waters of salvation, about to be instituted, by which little children, who are baptized, are reformed from their corruption back to the primitive condition of their nature." [2]

The reference of the bishop to the washing away of original sin in baptism is nothing to our purpose. The use of the ordinance is our point of inquiry. Of the abuse of it we have sufficiently spoken for a treatise of this kind while we were sifting the Pelagian controversy. Later Church historians will not probably find all the errors and excesses of "the fathers" confined to the first three or four Christian centuries.

In speaking of Abraham, in his work on the patriarch, as enjoined to circumcise infants, he says that the law very reasonably imposed the rite on every male infant,

[1] Ille Jordanem divisit, hic ad lavacrum salutare convertit.

[2] "Sed fortasse hoc supra nos et supra apostolos videatur expletum. Nam ille sub Elia diviso amne fluvialium recursus undarum in originem fluminis (sicut dicit Scriptura, Jordanes conversus est retrorsum) significat salutaris lavacri futura mysteria, per quæ in primordia naturæ suæ qui baptizati fuerint parvuli a malitia reformantur." — *Comment in St. Lucæ*, c. 1.

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even those of the bond-servant, that the remedy might be as extensive as the disease, and come on the child as early as his danger. He includes the proselyte by saying, that every race as well as age is exposed, and by the law was required and expected to be protected. Showing a spiritual meaning over circumcision and baptism, he says the import of the rite is plain. Those born in the house are Jews; and the purchased are Gentile believers; and both must be circumcised from sin, if they would be saved. "Both the home born and the foreign, the clean and the unclean, must be circumcised by the forgiveness of sins, so as to sin no more; since no one enters the kingdom of heaven except by the sacrament of baptism." . . . "For except one be born again, of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," quoting the words of Christ. Then he continues, "He excepts no one, not an infant, not one prevented by any necessity." [8]

These two citations from a witness, born A.D. 333, and dying A.D. 397, are as good proof of the practice of this rite commonly in that period, as though he had devoted whole chapters and tractates to it. The bishop of Milan evidently had other work than writing largely on an ordinance generally received and practised, as from the apostles.

[8] "Ergo et Judæus et Græcus, et quicumque crediderit, debet scire se circumcidere a peccatis, ut possit salvus fieri. Et domesticus, et alienigena, et justus, et peccator circumcidatur remissione peccatorum, ut peccatum non operetur amplius; quia nemo adscendit in regnum cælorum, nisi per sacramentum baptismatis. . . . Nisi enim quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto non potest introire in regnum Dei. Utique nullum excipit, non infantem, non aliqua præventum necessitate."—Ambrosii *de Abraham*, Lib. ii. c. 11.

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The careful reader will here note one of those synonyms for baptism, of which the early Christian writers made so free a use, and of which we shall find a great variety as we proceed. "Circumcised by the forgiveness of sins, since no one enters the kingdom of heaven except by the sacrament of baptism." Here, evidently, Ambrose uses "the forgiveness of sins," and "the sacrament of baptism," as meaning one and the same thing. So in the quotation above made from his Commentary on St. Luke, he calls baptism "the sacrament of the waters of salvation." Augustine expresses baptism by "the grace of the name of Christ." [4] Chrysostom calls it "circumcision;" "our circumcision, — I speak of that of baptism;" [5] and "enlightening" [6] and "the seal." [7] Siricius calls it "the saving water." [8]

As we proceed, the reader will find the following words and phrases as common synonyms for baptism: "The circumcision of Christ," "washing of regeneration," "sanctification," "consecration," "regeneration," "the laver of regeneration," "the laver of salvation," "the enlightening," "born of water," "spiritual circumcision," "sacrament of eternal salvotion," "renewal," &c.

In the citation of any passages where these terms occur, the text itself, or the context, will readily show that nothing else than baptism can be meant. Those early writers thus used varied expressions for the one act of baptism, as we use the words christen, consecrate, and dedicate, for baptize.

[4] p. 176. [5] p. 183. [6] p. 184. [7] p. 185. [8] p. 191.

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Basil, a father eminent in the Greek Church, was born about A.D. 329. He pursued his studies at Constantinople, Antioch, and Athens. At first a hermit, he became successively a deacon, a presbyter, an assistant bishop, and then sole bishop of Neo-Cæsarea. He was an able theologian, and an efficient manager in ecclesiastical affairs. He is introduced here among the ancient witnesses for infant baptism, not because he has written abundantly or with peculiar directness on the subject, though his testimony has weight, but because some things said by him have been made to bear against this ordinance as existing in his day.

In one of his sermons, delivered on a fast day, observed on account of a great drought and famine, he rebukes the church-members for absenting themselves.

"The grown men," he says, "generally follow their business. A very few come to join in the worship; and those, indolent, sleepy, and gazing about." "And these little boys, laying their books by at school and joining with us in the responses, do it as a relaxation and play," &c.[9]

It is quite evident that these children were baptized, because in the ancient church service only the baptized could remain through the prayers that called for responses. A few words will make this plain. In the church services of that day, the sermon came before the prayers; and to hear it any and all classes

[9] *Οἱ δὲ παῖδες οἱ σμικρότατοι ὄντοι, οἱ τὰς δελτους ἐν τοῖς διδασκαλίοις ἀποθέμενοι καὶ συμβοῶντες ἡμῖν, ὡς ἄνεσιν μᾶλλον καὶ τέρψιν τὸ πρᾶγμα μετέρχονται, κ.τ.λ.* — *Drought and Famine: a Fast Day-Sermon.*

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could be present, — heathen, Jews, catechumens, or candidates for membership. After the sermon followed the prayers; and these were of two kinds. First, prayer for the catechumens, repeated by the deacon. At each petition in this prayer, the congregation responded, "Lord have mercy on them." As all Jews and unbelievers and unbaptized ones, except the catechumens, were requested to leave the church before this prayer was offered; so, after it was offered, the catechumens themselves were requested to leave. Then the second kind of prayers followed, the baptized alone being left; and through these varied prayers, responses were made by the whole congregation remaining.[10]

When, therefore, Basil speaks of little children uniting in the responses, he virtually says they were baptized; since none but the baptized could be present during that part of the service.

One other item should be taken from Basil, as mentioned by Theodoret and other historians of that time. The only child of Valens, the emperor, being dangerously ill, Basil was called to the palace. After looking on the dying little one, he assured the father that the child would be restored if baptized. The child was baptized, but died. A query has been raised whether the child was not old enough to be baptized on his own account. But Theodoret calls the child *παιδίον*, the word used by St. Mark, when he says, "They brought young children" to Jesus, and so small that "he took them up in his arms;" and

[10] BINGHAM's Antiq. Chris Ch. book i. chap. 3; book xiv. chap. 5

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by St. Matthew, when he says, "They found the young child," "wrapped in swaddling clothes." Little doubt should be allowed that this was a case of infant baptism.

In one of his sermons Basil urges baptism on some of his hearers, who had evidently been brought up in Christian families, and therefore must have failed of infant consecration. From this some insist that the rite could not then have been in use. As well argue that it is not in use now, because some are urged to regard it. No doubt Christian parents neglected some of their duties then as well as in our times. Moreover, it is no improbable thing that some of these hearers, now chided for neglecting baptism, were too old for infant consecration when their parents were converted to Christianity, and, since their own conversion, had been very tardy in making a profession of love to Christ.

Gregory Nazianzen is an important link in our chain of evidence. Born A.D. 325, devoted to the Lord by his mother, Nonna, as early as Samuel, and his father, the bishop of Nazianzen for forty-five years, a student in the two Cæsareas of Cappadocia and Palestine, as also in Alexandria and Athens, his opportunities were good for knowing early the doctrines and customs of the Church. He was ordained a presbyter A.D. 361; afterward assistant bishop of his aged father; in A.D. 379 he was pressed into taking the chair of patriarch at Constantinople, but soon withdrew into a more congenial and quiet life, and died A.D. 390. He was one of the first of orators in the Greek Church; from his doctrinal

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studies and labors he gained the title of The Theologian; and as a polemic, a writer, and a man of a practical religious spirit and activity, he led the men of his era in shaping the course of events for the Church.

Among the extant works of Gregory is a sermon on Baptism, that settles, beyond any question, the practice of the rite on infants in his times. It may be well to preface the quotations that are about to be made from this writer with the remark, that he calls baptism by various terms, as, "the anointing," "the washing," "the gift," "the laver of regeneration," "the seal," "the divine formation," "the grace," "our improved formation," "the dedication," "the sanctification," "the enlightening."

Neander says that some of these synomyms came into use because the teachers of those days confounded regeneration with baptism, and connected the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit with the performance of this external act. Indeed, the fathers then commonly gave the name of regeneration to baptism alone. So in the opening of this sermon, Gregory says that baptism brings one into a new life, and that the baptized should guard most sacredly against sins afterwards, "because there is no second regeneration." [11] In another part of the same, he meets the frivolous excuses of many for delaying baptism, on the ground that sins committed afterwards could not be easily cleansed away. He warns them of the craft of the great adversary,

[11] Οὐκ ἔστιν δευτέρας ἀναγεννήσεως.

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who, if he cannot make them despise baptism, will make them so to prize it, and be over-cautious in its use, as to lose it altogether. Then he says that every age needs it,— youth and gray hairs and infants. "Have you an infant? Let not evil take advantage of the age: let it be sanctified from infancy; let it be consecrated by the Spirit from birth. You, as a faint-hearted and unbelieving mother, are afraid to bestow the seal on account of its weakness. But Hannah, even before Samuel was born, promised him to God; and, as soon as born, consecrated him, and clothed him in a holy garment, not fearing human weakness, but trusting in God." [12]

It is rare that we find an enforcement of the duty of infant baptism in any modern writer more plain and pointed than this. It is a clear, direct, earnest inculcation of the duty, through the appointed manner of God, to dedicate the child to the Most High. No one can misapprehend the allusion that he makes soon after. When he has reminded the mother of the use of amulets and charms, so common in that day for protection, he says, "Give to it the Trinity, that great and noble guard." [13]

Let the name of the Triune God, to whom he is consecrated, be called on him in the formula of

[12] Νήπιόν ἐστι σοὶ; Μὴ λαβέτω καιρὸν ἡ κακία, ἐκ βρέφους ἁγιασθήτω, ἐξ ὀνύχων καθιερωθήτω τῷ Πνεύματι. Σὺ δέδοικας τὴν σφραγίδα διὰ το φυσεως ἀσθενὲς, ὡς μικρόψυχος ἡ μήτηρ ὀλιγόπιστος.

Οὐκ Ἄννα δὲ καὶ πρὶν ἡ γυνηθῆναι τὸν Σαμουὴλ κυθυπέσχετο τῳ Θεῷ καὶ γεννηθέντα ἱερὸν εὐθὺς ποιεῖ, καὶ τῃ ἱερατικῇ στολῇ συνανέθεψεν, ὀυ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον φοβηθεῖσα, τῳ δε Θεῷ πιστεύσασα. — Greg. Naz. Or. xl.

[13] Δὸς ἀυτῷ τὴν Τριάδα, το μεγα καὶ καλὸν φυλακτήριον.

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baptism. This will prove the best amulet and charm against evil.

We pass to another important quotation. After urging this ordinance on those who understand its import, he supposes an objection, worded thus: —

"But what say you of infants, not yet old enough to realize the loss or the grace? Shall we baptize them? Most certainly, if any danger impend. Better to be consecrated without sense of it, than to die unsealed and unadmitted. And a reason to us for this is circumcision on the eighth day, — a certain typical seal, and applied to those not taking the sense of it, as also the anointing of the doorways, saving the first born by senseless things." Having given his opinion that some may be kept back to the third year, when they will be able to utter the baptismal responses, he continues: —

"But it is by all means fitting that they should be made safe by the laver, on account of the sudden attacks of danger and powerful assaults coming on us." [14]

This passage from Gregory's sermon is declarative of both a fact and a tendency in his times. The fact is the practice of this ordinance in his day. Or to state the same in the language of Neander, "Infant baptism was now generally recognized as an apostolical institution," and "acknowledged to be necessary."

The tendency was to neglect it, and because of

[14] *Τετειχίσθαι δε τῷ λουτρῷ παντὶ λόγῳ λυσιστελέστερον διὰ τὰς ἐξαίφνης συμπιπτούσας ἡμῖν προσβολὰς τῶν κινδύνων, καὶ βιηθείας ισχυροτερας.* — Or. xl.

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false views of the design and powers of baptism. Neander, while treating of its neglect by adult converts, thus states those false views, and the consequent delay of the rite: —

"They were disposed to enter into a sort of compact, or bargain, with God and Christ, to be permitted to enjoy as long as possible their sinful pleasures, and yet in the end, by the ordinance of baptism, which like a charm was to wipe away their sins, to be purified from all their stains, and attain to blessedness in a moment. Hence many put off baptism until they were reminded by mortal sickness, or some other sudden danger, of approaching death. Hence it was, that in times of public calamity, in earthquakes, in the dangers of war, multitudes hurried to baptism, and the number of the existing clergy scarcely sufficed for the wants of all." "The cause of delaying baptism, with numbers, was their want of any true interest in religion, their being bred and living along in a medley of Pagan and Christian superstitions; nor can it be denied, that the neglect of infant baptism contributed to prolong this sad state of things." "Many pious but mistaken parents dreaded intrusting the baptismal grace to the weak, unstable age of their children; which grace, once lost by sin, could never be regained. They wished rather to reserve it against the more decided and mature age of manhood, as a refuge from the temptation and storms of an uncertain life." [15]

And Neander, in supporting these statements,

[15] Church History, ii. 319 *et seq.*

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quotes this same sermon of Gregory from which the above extracts are taken.

Now, it is plain why Gregory gives the suggestion that infants, in certain cases, be kept back to the third year, while he urges that they immediately "should be made safe by the laver," in any case of imminent death. The apostolical and traditional theory of the Church moved him to preach and urge the early application of this seal; but public opinion, vitiated by a false view of the ordinance, was setting the other way, and reserving the rite, as having a cleansing power, to be applied, if they could so time it, in the last hours of life. Gregory attempted to compromise somewhat the true views in a medium time, and suggested the third year.

This little summary of the history of those two conflicting theories and wishes shows us how deeply imbedded in the foundations of the Church this ordinance for infants was at that very early day.

We have here, too, another of those historical crises and partisan exigencies, growing out of or centering in this rite, where one party must have been strongly tempted and pressed to deny its apostolical authority. If it had power to wash the soul clean for heaven, and if there was "no second regeneration" by the laver, and if sins committed after baptism were exceedingly difficult and almost impossible of removal, there was strong reason why not only infant baptism should be discarded, but adult baptism be deferred to the last moments of life. It was almost a question of salvation, under the theories of that day, to set infant baptism aside.

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Yet under all this partisan pressure, and amid all these tender spiritual anxieties of parents for the salvation of their children, no doubt is raised on the apostolical origin of the rite. They made no opposition to it, or urged delay of it, on the ground that it is a human invention and innovation in the Church, and may be ruled out by human authority.

In the writings of Optatus, Bishop of Mileve, we find a single passage only on our topic. Optatus was in office here about A.D. 368. He could not, of course, avoid controversy with the Donatists, and so wrote several books on that schism. In the dispute whether baptism is valid when administered by an heretical or unworthy officer, he compares the putting on of Christ to the putting on of a garment, and then says, —

"But lest any one should say that the Son of God is irreverently called by me a garment, let him read the apostle saying, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' O garment always the same and yet so variable, that clothes properly all ages and forms! It does not hang loosely about infants, nor is it too small for men, nor needs it any change for women." [16]

The passage does not need an explanation. No comment can make it plainer. He is speaking of baptism, and declares its fitness and adaptation to any

[16] "Sed ne quis dicat, temere a me Filium Dei vestem esse dictum, legat apostolum dicentem: Quotqot in nomine Christi baptizati estis, Christum induistis. O tunica semper una, et innumerabilis, quæ decenter vestiat et omnes ætates et formas! Nec in infantibus rugatur, nec in juvenibus tenditur, nec in fœminis mutatur." — *Lib. Quinto de Schis. Donatis.*

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age and either sex. Among the classes of persons to whom it is adapted he mentions infants. Why applicable and fitted to them, except as they were fit subjects for it? If infants were not then usually receiving it in the ministrations of the Church, the references to them had no pertinence, and the statement conveys a wrong impression.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

AN OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

IN this connection it will be well to notice the assertion of some, that many of the early Church fathers were not baptized in their infancy, and therefore the rite could not have been regarded as of divine authority. They give as instances these four in the Greek Church: Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Nectarius, and Chrysostom; and in the Latin Church, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. If these men were not baptized in infancy, it may have been owing to the fact that when they were infants their fathers were pagans, which we must inquire into; or it may have resulted from the tendency, that we have been considering, to defer the rite as long as could be safely done, and yet receive it before death. Moreover, it is to be considered that parents then, as now, might neglect a rite held by universal theory and in the general practice of the Church, and the infants neglected become eminent men afterward. Marked failures prove only and at best but a general observance. But let us inquire into the alleged facts.

The time of the baptism of Basil is nowhere mentioned, and so may have been in infancy; and some

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expressions of rhetorical fulness in Gregory's funeral oration on him take the meaning of infant baptism better than any other. For illustration, Gregory speaks of the reconstruction of his formation in the beginning of his life, and of his being consecrated from the womb and in infancy.[1]

It seems the more probable that Gregory here refers to his baptism; as he, in mentioning leading events in the life of Basil from his birth onward, makes there allusions to him in a time when his baptism would properly take place, and omits any allusion to it as taking place at any other time.

When much opposition, and for various reasons, was made against the continuance of Gregory Nazianzen in the patriarchate of Constantinople, he retired, and with a remark that would give great prosperity to the Church of God, if the spirit of it could become general: "If I am the cause of these unfortunate troubles, let me hasten away; but let the Church of Christ have peace." They appointed, as his successor, Nectarius, an unbaptized layman, of senatorial rank, no scholar, and less a divine, but of fine appearance and cultured manners. So they spoiled a good alderman and made a poor bishop, not an uncommon result when a factious church turns off an able and useful pastor.

As this Nectarius had not been baptized when elected, the opponents of infant baptism argue from the fact for their views. They disregard the Christian condition of things then existing, that very

[1] Ἐκ Βρέφους καθιερωμένος ἀπὸ μήτρας.

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many, if not half, the nominal Christians of the day were converted after their childhood, and, when converted, felt the force of the prevalent notion, that baptism had best be deferred till the approach of death. They overlook the fact, too, that nothing is known of the parents of Nectarius. They are as obscure in history as the parents of Cain's wife. If heathen, that is the best of reasons why their son failed of this ordinance. The argument that our opponents make here is an argument from the unknown, and also, as in the case of Basil, against the probable.

Chrysostom also is claimed for the same end. He intimates that his father died when he himself was very young, and neither the son nor any one implies that the father was a Christian. At the age of eighteen he was studying under the heathen teacher Libanius, whom Gibbon calls "the last glory of expiring paganism." Then, after being a pupil of Meletius, the bishop of Antioch, for a season, he was baptized by him when about twenty-one. Two historians, bishops of Alexandria, say that his mother, Anthusa, was baptized afterward. When he was transferred from the heathen to the Christian school, Libanius, according to Sozomen, said that the Christians stole him away. [*Ἐσύλησαν.*] This would imply that he was a pagan pupil, as following his father, and became a Christian convert. Neander and Mosheim imply that his mother was a Christian from his infancy; but evidently his father was not, and so he failed of infant baptism, as the will of the father would prevail in such a case, and in those times.

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The varied and earnest manner in which Chrysostom urged the duty and privileges and uses of infant baptism, as we have seen, shows that he would be very unwilling that his unfortunate loss of it should be turned against the ordinance, or be forced into an evidence that it was not common in the days of his infancy.

Gregory Nazianzen was not baptized in infancy, yet he had Christian parents. Two difficulties, however, lie in the way of the use of this great man's name against the ordinance in question. The funeral oration of Gregory on his father[2] makes it evident that his father was not a Christian till some time after his marriage. How soon after the marriage Gregory was born is unknown with an exactness sufficient for an argument in this case. Mosheim says that Gregory was born about A.D. 325; Guericke says about 330. After some intricate study to fix the time more definitely, one is quite inclined to sympathize with Dr. Wall, who, having gone through a similar labor, says that he is "quite out of the humor of entering on a new search after anybody's age." If born before his father's conversion, his lack of baptism in infancy makes nothing against the Christian usage of the day. The argument of our opponents, therefore, gains in this case only the advantage of an uncertainty, and an interrogation point.

Moreover, the father of Gregory was a Hypsistarian, a worshipper of the Highest [ὕψιστος], a sect who recognized one absolute essence, having with this tenet

[2] Orat. xix.

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a mixture of Jewish and pagan notions. Neander informs us that his wife, "the pious Nonna, by her prayers, and the silent influence of the religion which shone through her life, gradually won over to the gospel her husband, who had belonged to an unchristian sect.[3] This winning of the father of Gregory "gradually" doubles the doubt whether his son was not born while the father was yet an unchristian man, and so, as a matter of course, lost infant baptism.

Augustine was baptized in his thirty-third year, as he himself states in his Confessions. Some have cast this fact into an interrogative and argumentative form against the use of infant baptism in the early church, thus: If the ordinance was then common, why was not Augustine baptized in his infancy? Those same Confessions would answer this question, if faithfully consulted. The father of Augustine was not a Christian till late in life. In his Confessions, Augustine, in speaking to God of his mother, uses these words: "Finally, her own husband, towards the very end of his earthly life, did she gain unto Thee."[4]

Speaking of living at home with his parents, in his sixteenth year, and showing most unworthy youthful passions and habits, that affected his mother "with a holy fear and trembling," he says, "My father was as yet but a catechumen, and that but recently."[5]

[3] His. ii. 226 and 707; *note* 1.

[4] *Confessions of St. Augustine*, B. ix. ch. 9. Wiley & Putnam: New York. 1844.

[5] Do. B. ii., ch. 3.

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Earlier than this, and when, probably, he was somewhat under ten years of age, he had a dangerous attack of illness, and eagerly sought baptism as a cleansing for death and heaven, which his mother prepared to grant, when he recovered. He then says, "And so, as if I must needs be again polluted should I live, my cleansing was deferred, because the defilements of sin would, after that washing, bring greater and more perilous guilt." Then, speaking of his father in immediate connection with this delay of baptism, he adds: "He did not yet believe." [6]

The paganism of the father, therefore, stood in the way of the infant baptism of Augustine. If it be said that his mother, Monica, was a Christian at his birth, and might have had him baptized if it had been usage, this must be replied: His mother, as we have seen by the quotation, was hindered by the erroneous notion of the age, — that the rite should be deferred to a time as near to death as they could trust their judgment in determining. Moreover, according to the sentiment and practice of those times, the will of the father ruled in important acts for the child.

This accorded with the judgment of Monica, as her son quotes her advice to those wives who opposed the will of their husbands: "From the time they heard the marriage writings read to them they should account them as indentures, whereby they were made servants; and so remembering their condition, not set themselves up against their lords." [7]

And the more likely would Monica be to follow her

[6] "Ille nondum crediderat." Do. B. i., ch. 11.
[7] Do. B. ix., ch. 9.

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own advice, since Patricius, her husband, was a man of quick temper, harsh in his manner, imperious in his rule, and dissolute in his morals as a husband.

It is affirmed that Jerome was not baptized till he was about thirty years of age, and on an occasion at Rome, although born of Christian parents. There may be reasons for such an affirmation; but, so far as appears, the statement is a traditional and unexamined one, based on the interpretation that Erasmus gives to two expressions in two of Jerome's letters.

In writing to Damasus, the bishop of Rome, he asks, as he says, information from that city "where I took on me the garments of Christ." [8]

Not receiving immediate reply, he wrote again for the information, with a varied allusion again to what is assumed to have been his baptism: "As I formerly wrote you, I having taken on me the vestment of Christ in the Roman city," &c. [9]

This expression, "receiving the vestment of Christ," may be a synonym for baptism, and it may be that he here refers to his entrance on the monkish life and habits while a student at Rome. The garments of the nuns were called *Christi tunicam*, *Christi flammeum*, — the coat, the veil of Christ; and those expressions of Jerome would well designate the vestments of the monks. But be the interpretation what it may, here is all the evidence, so far as common sources furnish it, that Jerome was not baptized in infancy.

The name of Ambrose has sometimes been used to

[8] "Unde olim Christi vestamenta suscepi." Ep. lvii.
[9] "Christi vestem in Romana urbe suscipiens," &c.

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show that infant baptism was not common in the days of his infancy, since he was not baptized till after his nomination as bishop of Milan, and only eight days before his ordination to that office. All which is true as to the bishop; but it makes no point for those adducing his case, since there is no evidence that his parents were Christian when he was born. His father was a Roman nobleman, and governor of Gaul; and there is not only nothing to show that he was not a pagan, but many things making it probable that he was. After Ambrose had come into middle life, his mother is spoken of as a Christian widow at Rome, and so probably came late herself, as well as her distinguished son, into the faith of Christ.

Not one of these seven cases, therefore, helps to disprove the use of infant baptism in the days of those fathers.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE QUESTION BEFORE COUNCILS AGAIN.

WE move now sixty years and more backward toward the times of the apostles: from the bishop of Milan, A.D. 368, to the council of Neocæsarea, A.D. 314, and to the council of Elvira, A.D. 305. If this rite sprung up after the days of the apostles, we ought very soon, in our backward movement toward them, to find it obscured and resisted and just struggling into place and use, as all innovations in popular usage are compelled to gain position and permanence. But the recognition of the ordinance in the quotation about to be made from the canons of the council of Neocæsarea is as clear and sharply defined and generally conceded as any thing in Augustine or Jonathan Edwards.

These early councils, not unlike the ministerial associations of our day, often entertained professional discussions, and solved, if possible, the doubts of any one on practical questions. Among the various items submitted to this council for opinion was this: whether a woman *enceinte*, and wishing baptism, should be baptized in her present condition, or delay the dedication till after the birth of the child. This question became a practical one, because of the doubt

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that would lie after the birth of the child, whether or not it was baptized in the baptism of its mother. An historical fact or two will show the occasion of this question, and in what light the council must receive and answer it.

We have seen by ample testimony that Christian baptism was at first only an adoption and elevation of Jewish proselyte baptism, as found and practised in the times of John the Baptist, and of Christ and his apostles. Then, when Gentile parents, father or mother, or both, became proselytes to Judaism, they became Jews through the rite of baptism. And when they received the rite they were required to bring their children also to receive it, — their daughters of thirteen years and a day and under, and their sons of twelve years and a day and under. Nor could any parent be received unless this condition concerning children be complied with. But a practical question came up for the decision of the Rabbies: whether a child born after the baptism of the mother, and she being *enceinte* at the time of her baptism, must be baptized in order to become fully and properly a Jew. Their ruling runs thus: "If a woman *enceinte* become a proselyte and be baptized, her child needs not baptism when it is born." [1]

This decision was based on the specific theory of the Jews, that when a Gentile passed over as one of an unclean nation to become a Jew, baptism cleansed or purified both him and his posterity, if yet unborn. Now, as infant baptism in the Christian Church had

[1] LIGHTFOOT, vol. ii. 118. London, Folio, 1684.

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for its original and model this infant proselyte baptism of the Jews, it was quite natural that the question that the Rabbies answered should re-appear before a Christian council, and in a time so near to the apostles that we may suppose the council knew very well the theory and practice of the apostolic Church. The scruple that raised it in the Jewish mind would raise it also in the Christian mind. We must consider, too, that at the time of this council the Jewish Church was vigorous and proselyting; and Jewish refusal to baptize an infant in the case supposed must have been known to the council, and so stimulate them to discussion and discrimination on the question submitted. They gave this answer: —

"As to a woman *enceinte*, it is proper for her to be enlightened when she pleases, for in this the mother communicates nothing to the offspring." [2]

It will be noticed that the opinion of the council is directly opposed to the opinion of the Rabbies. The decisions are opposite of necessity, from the opposite theories of the two parties. With the Jew, baptism was a ceremonial cleansing of a stock, — a race, — "thee and thy seed." If so, the unborn child must share in its effects with the mother. With the council the purification implied in baptism, whether typical or actual, was personal only, and confined in its effects to the single subject receiving it. Those ef-

[2] Περὶ κνοφορούσης ὅτι δεῖ φωτίζεσθαι* ὁπότε βούλεται. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ κοινωνεῖ ἡ τίκτουσα τῷ τικτομένῳ. Conc. Neocæs. Can. vi.

* A word here is rendered "enlightened," which the lexicons would have warranted one in rendering "baptized," since those early church fathers used it as the synonym of that word. But we wish so faithfully to use these old witnesses as to avoid the appearance even of an argumentative translation.

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fects could not become hereditary, and so the unborn child could not receive it through its mother.

The action of the council of Neocæsarea in this case throws a strong light on our path of investigation; for it is a body of clergymen who speak, and not one man; and their answer is to a question implying doubts, and so is given after deliberation. There is, moreover, no implication in what they say, that the rite as for infants was a mere human notion, and might be performed or neglected on any child at the option of the parent. They give opinion in the case as if the ordinance was apostolic and in common practice.

We gain another item of evidence from the council of Elvira in Spain, A.D. 305, in the form of infant church-membership. The council is laying down rules for the treatment of those who have apostatized and then wish to return to the true Church.

"If any one shall go over from the Church catholic to any heresy, and then would return again to the Church, penitence should not be denied to him, because he has discovered his sin. Let him exercise repentance for ten years, and after ten years he ought to be admitted to the communion. But, if infants have been carried over, they ought to be taken back immediately, because they have not sinned by their own fault."[3]

[3] "Si quis de catholica ecclesia ad hæresim transitum fecerit, rursusque ad ecclesiam recurrerit, placuit huic pœnitentiam non esse denegandam, eo quod cognoverit peccatum suum; qui etiam decem annis agat pœnitentiam; cui post decem annos præstari communio debet. Si vero infantes fuerint transducti, quod non suo vitio peccaverint, incunctanter recepi debent." — *Conc. Eliber.* can. xxii.

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This canon evidently has in view two classes of apostates, — those who went over to heresy as adults, and knowingly, and those who were carried over by their parents in their tender and irresponsible years. The canon contemplates the restoration of both to the communion of the catholic Church, as having discovered their error and wishing to be restored. One class it is proposed to restore after ten years' penitence, and the other class immediately on application, *incunctanter*. Plainly, the first class are church-members. The language of the canon referring to them is not pertinent to a catechumen. No catechumen could be said to go out from the Church, and return to the Church; nor do the fathers so speak. But the canon couples the two classes in the same expressions as to going out of the Church, and being restored to the Church; thus showing that both had membership. Therefore the infants of the canon had been baptized, as baptism was indispensable to membership. If they had not been baptized, they must have taken the position and processes of catechumens. This would require instruction and delay; but the council says, let them be "taken back immediately." The evidence of infant baptism in this canon appears to be unimpeachable.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SIXTY-SIX BISHOPS, AND CYPRIAN'S LETTER TO FIDUS.

WE come now fifty years nearer to the apostles, when we bring Cyprian, and sixty-five other bishops, on the stand. If any reader of this historical argument is yet sceptical, his special attention is called to the testimony about to be introduced, both in regard to its positive nature, and to the time when it was furnished.

It was A.D. 253, that a large meeting of African bishops was held at Carthage. It was one of those informal meetings in the ancient Church, held occasionally at convenient centres, by the pastors of the territory. They met for mutual improvement, and for the consideration of any question presented that might concern the welfare of the Church.

At this meeting sixty-six were present. What other topics were raised for consultation we are not informed; but, Fidus, a country pastor, presented by letter two questions. One was, whether an infant might receive baptism before it was eight days old. This question Fidus accompanies with an argument in the negative. He urges that earlier than the eighth day the babe would seem to be so unfinished

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and unclean that men would revolt from giving to it the usual kiss of welcome into the church. He makes much also of the fact that circumcision was prescribed for the eighth day, and insists that the rule of initiation in that form should hold in this. He also urges other things against the baptism of an infant before the eighth day.

The question and argument of Fidus appear to have been very freely discussed by the bishops, and their result was unanimous. The duty of condensing their opinions, and making reply to Fidus, was devolved on Cyprian. This letter of Cyprian to Fidus is preserved. In the edition of his works by Parmelius, and by the Benedictines, it is the fifty-ninth epistle; in the Oxford edition of Fell, it is the sixty-fourth. We introduce here so much of it as will set forth distinctly the historical genealogy of infant baptism in its pedigree toward the apostles.

"But as to the case of infants, who, you said, ought not to be baptized within the second or third day of their birth; and as to your point, that the law of ancient circumcision should be regarded, and a child not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day of its birth, — it seemed quite otherwise to all of us in council. No one agreed to the thing that you thought ought to be done. . . .

"And therefore, brother dearly beloved, this was our conclusion in council, that no one ought to be kept back by us from baptism and from the grace of God, who is merciful and kind and tender toward all. For while we think that attention and regard should be had for the wants of all, we think that we ought

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to do this especially for infants and the new-born, who seem to claim our aid and the divine compassion the more, in that from their hour of birth, wailing and weeping, they do nothing except to implore aid."[1]

This epistle of the martyr bishop of Carthage is worthy of special attention. As a witness concerning the ordinance of infant baptism, it has a leading and commanding place among the ancients. It is a genuine epistle of Cyprian, and as well authenticated as any of the works of any of the fathers. Jerome and Augustine have quoted it so freely that almost every passage of it may be found in their works. And they lived so near to the time of its author, that we cannot suppose it possible that they were duped by a forgery. Particular notes should be made on the letter as evidence worthy of division, and a studied attention in our discussion.

(1.) The question submitted by Fidus. It is sometimes the case that a question well put gives more information than the answer. It is in a meas-

[1] Quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet, quos dixisti intra secundum vel tertium diem, quo nati sunt, constitutos baptizari non oportere, et considerandum esse legem circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum diem eum qui natus est baptizandum et sacrificandum non putares, longè aliud in concilio nostro omnibus visum est. In hoc enim quod tu putabas esse faciendum, nemo consensit.

Et idcirco, frater carissime, hæc fuit in concilio nostra sententia, a baptismo atque a gratiâ Dei, qui omnibus misericors et benignus et pius est, neminem per nos debere prohiberi.

Quod cum circa universos observandum sit, atque retinendum, magis circa infantes ipsos et recèns natos obsesvandum putamus, qui hoc ipso de ope nostrâ, ac de divinâ misericordiâ plus merentur, quod in primo statim nativitatis suæ ortu plorantes ac flentes nihil aliud faciunt quàm deprecantur. — *Ep.* lviii. — *Ox. Ed.* lxiv.

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ure so in this case. The inquiry is a large revelation on the subject of infant baptism at that time. For in it Fidus assumes the validity and universality of the ordinance. It is no part of his inquiry whether the rite shall be administered. By the very terms in which he puts his question he concedes this. The scriptural authority for the ordinance, or its propriety, does not lie in any doubt in his mind. A question so sharp and so precise in its point could arise only where infant baptism, by common consent, was assumed, granted, and practised as a Christian ordinance. The question of Fidus is simply one of time: May the rite be administered before the child is eight days old? Would such a question ever arise in a Baptist community? And the discussion and answer of the question concede all that Fidus concedes in it, as to the prevalence of the rite. Were the ordinance at that time an innovation, or had it intruded itself into the Church within the memory of some of the aged ministers in the assembly, such a question could not have come in and been discussed, under so full an assumption and admission of its apostolical authority. Not only is its divine institution as fully conceded as adult baptism, but the council say, "We think that we ought to do this especially for infants and the new-born." They thus call for it a more prompt and prominent attention than for adult baptism.

(2.) The connection that Fidus makes between baptism and circumcision. He argues that the rule of baptism must be the same as the rule of circumcision, as to time, and that, therefore, the only proper

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day for the administration is the eighth. Is it an undesigned and untaught coincidence that he here presents? Why does he connect the two rites at all? Why make such a connection of them in the eighth day? He evidently regards the two as initiatory to the Church under its ancient and modern administration, and the latter as taking the place of the former. Hence baptism is here called "the spiritual circumcision." All this is significant as found in the letter of a bishop living so near to the times of the apostles. We cannot escape the conviction that this connecting of the two rites, and this law of time, and the use of the word circumcision as the synonym for baptism, in the letters before us, are the result of tradition and instruction from the apostles, and that the latter ordinance comes by their authority in the place of the former. If such were the teaching and belief of that early day, we can easily explain these expressions and allusions and reasonings. Otherwise the coincidences are very strangely accidental, lying even totally outside the problem of the calculation of chances that they would ever occur.

(3.) The large section of the Church represented in this council. The number of bishops is sixty-six. At that early day, A.D. 253, this number must have represented a large portion of the African Churches; for in the best days of Christianity on that continent the number of bishoprics did not exceed five hundred. This body, then, is no local clique of the clergy, drawn together on some principle of doctrinal or politic affinity. Wide geographical boundaries mark the limits from which they come. It is a pro-

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miscuous gathering, not knowing, till gathered, to what questions they were to make answer. A draft by lot on the Church at large would not probably have brought together fairer representatives of the Christian faith and practice concerning infant baptism than were found in that Carthaginian body.

(4.) Their perfect agreement in answer to the question of Fidus. There is a grateful unanimity among them, for one who loves the sacrament in question, as one of the foundation stones of Zion. "No one agreed to the thing that you thought ought to be done," *nemo consensit.* The waiting for baptism to the eighth day of the child was unanimously overruled. This unity of opinion and result assures us that they reasoned from a unity of faith and of practice.

Such agreement in faith and practice through the Church, and out of which this unanimity in advice to Fidus sprang, may have resulted from either of two causes. There may have been a universal prevalence of the teaching of Christ and his apostles, that infant baptism is a divine institution in the Church. Or there may have been a universal prevalence of such a rite, and a universal belief in it as of divine origin, while it was only a forgery and an imposition among the original and authoritative rites of the Church. In determining which of these causes did, probably, lead the council to this unity of advice to Fidus, we come to the final reflection proposed on the letter in question: —

(5.) The time when this assembly was convened. Some of its members could, very like, make their

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memories cover nearly half the period between the time of their session and the time of living apostles. They knew the generation who knew the apostles. In so narrow space of time could infant baptism have sprung up of human device, and established itself so widely and so absolutely? If this rite be an innovation and corruption among the institutions of the apostles, it must have come in by slow introduction. Three-quarters of a century would hardly suffice for so radical and fundamental a change in the constitution of the Church of God.

For it must be firmly carried in mind, that seventy-five years then and now are, practically, two very different periods of time. With our routes of travel by land and sea, and lively and constant going to and fro; with our printing press, prolific in daily, weekly, and volume issues; with national and international postal systems; with locomotives flying across the continents like birds of passage; with telegraphic wires gathering into one centre the present leading thoughts of five continents in six hours, — our years are half centuries to those of Cyprian and old Carthage. Then thought went on foot from city to city, and by word of mouth from country to country, or; if it took carriage, it was the lumbering and contracted vehicle of the copyist and parchment. Then the protracted absence of the African Livingstone would have created little surprise. In seventy-five such years could an innovation, an imposition, creep in and carry the entire African Church? But for the sake of an inquiry, allow three-quarters of a century to be a sufficient time for this.

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Between the time of this meeting at Carthage and the death of the last apostle was about one hundred and fifty years. Divide the time into two equal parts.

Could the invention and imposition of this rite have taken place in the last half of this interval? But that would have been within the lifetime and knowledge of these bishops. If an innovation of their own day, and known to them, could they have gone through the discussion of the question with Fidus, and come to that unanimous and written result with no intimation or breathed suspicion that the ordinance was of human invention, and so should be left with the widest range of human judgment to perform when it pleased, or not all? The entire teaching and spirit of the letter show that they supposed they were dealing with a divine ordinance, which could not be true if introduced within their memory and knowledge.

Then, on the other hand, could the innovation have taken place during the first half of this interval? But it is claimed by those who regard this ordinance as of man's devising, that it is a great violation and departure from the primitive and apostolical constitution of the Church. It is an innovation and change, say they, of vast magnitude. Could it have been wrought in seventy-five years, no pure and protesting antipædobaptist minority remaining, nor any record of the violation thus done to God's Church? No person, paper or tradition, to prevent the unity of opinion and result in that body of sixty-six? Could the change have been wrought in those first seventy-

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five years, following the apostles, when there were so many living and influential men in the Church whom the apostles themselves had trained and indoctrinated?

On the theory that infant baptism is a human device, and a forgery thrust in among apostolic institutions, the Letter of Cyprian to Fidus is a vast perplexity. The narrow and definite question that it answers, the number of bishops for whom it speaks, their perfect unanimity in opinion, and their nearness to the apostolic age, are confusing thoughts, if we assume that this rite is not of the apostles. If it be an invention of ritualists, begun so early, carried so thoroughly and widely, and all knowledge and history of its corrupt human beginning lost so profoundly, and all within one hundred and fifty years of the apostolic age, then it is a marvel in Christian history without a parallel. We turn to those rejecting this ordinance for any comfortable disposition of this letter. Their inventive theory, in the face of Cyprian's Letter, would almost make it possible to forge passages into the Declaration of American Independence.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TESTIMONY OF ORIGEN.

WE come now, in our progress, to consult the works of Origen. This brings us to a point for observation much nearer to the apostles; for he was born at Alexandria, A.D. 185. He was of a Christian ancestry, parents and grandparents, according to Eusebius.[1]

His father, as a devout Christian, required him, when a boy, to commit to memory, daily, some portion of the Scriptures; and, when the father suffered martyrdom, Origen, then a lad of seventeen, wished to suffer with him, and was kept back only by his mother. Under the persecution, the whole property of the Origen family was confiscated. Origen became a catechetic and philosophical teacher, and a devout Christian, as well as austere; for he ate the coarsest food, went barefoot, and slept on the ground. He sold his large and valuable pagan library for a perpetual income of about seven cents a day, for a living, and so gave himself up to study and teach and propagate Christianity, while the pagans watched his house and

[1] Ἐκ προγόνων κατὰ Χριστὸν. — *Eccl. His.* Lib. vi. c. 19.

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walks for opportunity to assassinate him. Not only was he "master of the literature and science of that age," says Dr. Murdock, but he "was beyond question the first biblical scholar of the age."[2]

Guericke calls Origen "the most learned and stimulating, and in all respects one of the most distinguished, of the primitive fathers, and one who has exerted an abiding influence upon the history of theology."[3]

So descending from a Christian ancestry, and so educated in things pertaining to the Christian Church, any testimony he may give on the question in hand should have great weight. Standing so near to the apostles, the light between him and them could, indeed, be but little obscured.

Born within eighty-five years of the time of a living apostle, and whose grandfather, very like, may have known "the beloved disciple," Origen had no need to go out of his own family to know the theory and practice of the apostolic Church in regard to infant baptism. When, therefore, Origen says, that "the Church received the order from the apostles to give baptism to infants also," as he does in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,[4] we can readily see that his father may have learned this from men to whom apostles taught it personally.

It will be noticed that we are coming now into close quarters with the apostles themselves. Our

[2] MOSHEIM, i. 167.

[3] Ancient Church, Shedd's Trans. p. 227.

[4] "Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare."

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converging lines of evidence are bringing both parties in this investigation into a very sharp and closing angle. Geologists often find bowlders that have been carried by natural forces to great distances from their original situations and home mountains. In those glacier periods and huge ice-floes from the north, these rocky masses were carried southward along the continent; and the geologist, finding them isolated and peculiar, as he goes northward, can readily tell from their characteristics, to what kind of rocky ranges and strata he is approaching; and he at length finds the mountain itself, whence the fragments started. As we have been working our way slowly backward toward the apostolic and primitive formations, we have been meeting these ecclesiastical bowlders. They have a likeness in common, while they are found in the converging lines of a common drift. It looks now as if we should find their common starting place and home in the mountains that are round about Jerusalem. If so, they will probably be proved to be part and parcel of the stones of Mount Zion itself. We have just passed by the Cyprian bowlder. To those wishing to turn it aside we think it will prove to be the *insuperabile saxum*. The Origenistic group is just before us.

In his eighth homily on Leviticus, Origen presses the proofs of human depravity; and, to the other points, he makes this addition: —

"To all which things this also can be added, that, since the baptism of the Church is given for the remission of sins, baptism, according to the usage of the Church, is also given to infants, when, if there

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were nothing in infants that needed forgiveness, this grace of baptism would seem to be superfluous." [5]

Here Origen attempts to prove one of his peculiar notions by citing the rite of infant baptism as a common practice of the Church.

In another of his commentaries he brings out the same thought, and appeals to the same usage: —

"As the occasion gives me the opportunity, I will notice a thing that causes frequent discussions among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. What sins? Or when did they sin? Or how can there be any reason for the laver for infants, unless for the reason I gave just now, that no one is free from taint, not if his life had been but one day on the earth. For this reason infants are baptized, because in the sacrament of baptism natural corruption is washed away." [6]

In his exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he says that the Levitical sin-offering for every newborn child, indicated that any child, even of one day,

[5] "Addi his etiam illud potest, ut requiratur quid causæ sit, cum baptisma ecclesiæ in remissionem peccatorum detur, secundum ecclesiæ observantiam etiam parvulis baptismum dari; cum utique si nihil esse in parvulis quod ad remissionem deberet et indulgentiam pertinere, gratia baptismi superflua videretur." — *Hom.* viii. in Lev. c. 12.

[6] "Quod frequenter inter fratres quæritur, loci occasione commotus, retracto. Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum. Quorum peccatorum? Vel quo tempore peccaverunt? Aut quo modo potest ulla lavacri in parvulis ratio subsistere, nisi juxta illum sensum de quo paulo ante diximus: nullus mundus a sorde, nec si unius diei quidem fuerit vita ejus super terram? Et quia per baptismi sacramentum nativitatis sordes deponuntur, propterea baptizantur et parvuli." — *Hom. in Lucam*, xiv.

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had sins to be remitted; and then he proceeds to say: —

"For this same thing the Church has received from the apostles the order to administer baptism to infants. For they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, well knew that there is a natural corruption of sin in all, which must be washed away by water and the Spirit." [7]

This testimony of Origen to the practice of infant baptism, in his times and earlier, has the greater force, as it comes in the easy and natural way of allusions. He has no point to establish by proving that it was practised. He makes incidental reference to it, as well known and common practice. He assumes that everybody knows the fact, and he alludes to it merely to use it.

He also says that the Church does this by an order or tradition from the apostles. This is direct, positive, and without the possibility of an ambiguity. Indeed, no quotation that we have made from him is open to that verbal criticism and affected scepticism, by which the vitality and force are sometimes expelled from a well-cited passage. Origen, as quoted, is so explicit as to be beyond the power of misunderstanding and misapplication.

It remains only to speak, in a word, of the authenticity and genuineness of these quotations from Origen.

[7] "Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare. Sciebant enim illi quibus mysteriorum secreta commissa sunt divinorum, quia essent in omnibus genuinæ sordes peccati, quæ per aquam et Spirutum ablui deberent." — *Com. in Epis. ad. Rom.* Lib. v.

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The works from which we have extracted them remain to us only in Latin translations, the original Greek having perished. The homily on Leviticus, and the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, were translated by Rufinus, and the homily on St. Luke by Jerome. Both these translators lived within one hundred years of the times of Origen; and, being learned men, they must have known whether he misstated the practice of the Church in this rite. If they suspected him of error, we cannot suppose they would have translated and given his erroneous teachings to the world without caveat or protest.

It is true, when the translated works of Origen were collected, some spurious writings were gathered with them, and attributed to him. But the homily on Luke could not have been one of them; since Jerome owns to the fact that he translated it, and no one questions but that Rufinus translated the other works quoted.

It is also true that Rufinus intentionally made omissions, in his translations, of passages in which he regarded Origen as unorthodox, though he is not accused of making interpolations. As Rufinus was an ardent admirer of Origen, we may presume the passages in question would have been omitted if they inculcated what the Church had not accepted, and so would endanger the reputation of their author. Besides, they are sustained fully in sentiment by the passage in the homily on St. Luke, over whose genuineness there hangs no doubt. It is to be considered, too, that these translations were made while their

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Greek originals were common; and so any variations from the Greek would be liable to immediate discovery and exposure.

Neander, alluding to the statement of Origen, that the Church received the order from the apostles to baptize infants, makes this remark: —

"An expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution, which was considered of special importance, to the apostles."[8]

This remark of the eminent historian savors not a little of the theorist; and it is a fair index to that unfortunate fact in his history, that all his historical evidences on infant baptism in the first four centuries are for the institution as apostolical, while his philosophizing on the facts is against it. There appears to be, throughout his great work, a purpose wrought out to neutralize the legitimate influence of the facts that he adduces on this subject.

[8] Ch. His. i. 314.

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CHAPTER XXX.

TERTULLIAN.

WE come next in order to take the testimony of Tertullian, a presbyter in the Church at Carthage. He was born there, of pagan parents, about A.D. 160. This brings us a quarter of a century nearer to the apostles than the times of Origen, and within a century of the time when the most of the New Testament was written. He was one of the most influential and learned of the authors of his times. Guericke esteems him as one of "the three leading and representative minds in the Church at the close of the second century."[1]

"In the Latin language," says Mosheim, "scarcely any writer of this century elucidated and defended the Christian religion, except Tertullian." "He had much learning, but lacked discretion and judgment."[2]

He was erratic, and even heretical, in some of his religious views, being for years a Montanist. But these imperfections can in no manner impeach his ability or fidelity in making historical allusions to the ordinance and use of infant baptism, as then held and practised.

[1] Ancient Church, 146; note 2. [2] Eccl. His. i. 122, 8.

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He wrote a treatise on the subject of baptism. Holding to the doctrine that the stain of original sin attaches to every child of Adam, and that baptism is efficacious to wash it away, he says, —

"Since it is agreed that no one can obtain salvation without baptism, according to that marked saying of the Lord, Except a man be born of water he cannot have salvation, scruples arise, and the rash dissertations of some, how, by that rule, any apostle could be saved, excepting St. Paul. For since Paul, only of them all, received the baptism of Christ, the others who failed of the water of Christ, must either be in great danger, that the rule may stand, or the rule is rescinded, if salvation is obtained without baptism."[8]

Tertullian here makes baptism a logical necessity for salvation. If, then, infants did not receive it, they must have incurred the great peril, as those "who failed of the water of Christ."

Of course we have now nothing to do with the truth or error of those notions about the taint of Adam's sin, and its supposed washing away in baptism and failure of salvation without the rite. We are concerned only with the practice of the ancient Church in this ordinance. But so earnestly did Tertullian hold these views of the necessity of baptism,

[8] Quum vero præscribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem, ex illa maxima pronunciatione Domini, qui ait; nisi natus ex aqua quis erit, non habet salutem; suboriuntur scrupuli, imo temerarii tractatus quorumdam, quo modo exista præscriptione apostolis salus competat, quos tinctos non invenimus in Domino, præter Paulum: imo, cum Paulus solus ex illis baptismum Christi induerit, aut præjudicatum esse de cæterorum periculo, qui careant aqua Christi, ut præscriptio salva sit; aut rescindi præscriptionem, si etiam non tinctis salus statua est. — TERTULL., *De Baptismo*, c. 12.

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that he put the duty on laymen to administer the rite, when death made the circumstances urgent. Yet with great caution they were to baptize: —

"Let it suffice that you exercise this right only in extreme cases, when the circumstances of place or time or person urge it. Then the boldness of him helping will be allowable, when the danger of him needing is imperative." [4]

Reading the passages now quoted from this eminent father, no one would doubt as to his theory and practice in this matter, and from these would naturally and safely infer the custom of the Church in that day. There is, however, another passage in Tertullian that must be quoted and harmonized with the preceding, if, indeed, there is any discrepancy, as some maintain.

"According to the condition and disposition and age, also, of every person, the delay of baptism is more useful, but especially for little children. For what reason is there, except in case of necessity, that the sponsors should be brought into danger, since they may fail to keep their promises through death, and may be deceived by the development of a sinful disposition. The Master indeed says, Forbid them not to come to me. Therefore, let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they are instructed, when they understand whither they are to come. Let them be made Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why should their innocent age make haste for the forgiveness of sins? . . . For

[4] Sufficiat scilicet in necessitatibus utaris, sicubi aut loci aut temporis aut personæ conditio compellit. Tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur cum urget circumstantia periclitantis. — De. c. xvii.

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cause no less, the unmarried should be delayed, for whom temptation is in preparation," &c.[5]

These passages from Tertullian are worthy of several specific remarks.

(1.) What he here says is declaratory of infant baptism, as common usage at that day. He urges its delay for little children; he speaks of godfathers in the baptism of children; he recommends delay for those whose disposition has not yet shown its character; he quotes the command of our Lord concerning infants; he counsels that they be kept back till they are grown up, till they have an education, till they know what the ordinance means, and can intelligently receive Christ. All this implies infants, and that it was usual to baptize them.

(2.) He wishes to effect a change in the practice of the Church in this matter. Personally, he does not favor early baptism, and presses his objections to it. He holds it to be indispensable to salvation, and provides for the administration in the case of a dying infant, even by the irregularity of lay baptism. Yet, where delay may be safe, he urges delay, as if sins committed after baptism could have remission only

[5] Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est; præcipue tamen circum parvulos. Quid enim necesse est, si non tam necesse, sponsores etiam periculo ingeri? Quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu malæ indolis falli. Ait quidem Dominus, nolite illos prohibere ad me venire. Veniant, ergo, dum adoleseunt, veniant dum discunt, dum quo veniant docentur. Fiant Christiani quum Christum nosse potuerint. Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum? . . . Non minori de causa innupti quoque procrastinandi, in quibus tentatio præparata est, etc. — De. c. xviii.

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with peculiar difficulty. Virtually he advocates antipædobaptist views in a pædobaptist Church. He leads off among the fathers in opposing the rite, except the peril of death call for it. He holds the two notions, that baptism must precede salvation, and that sins committed after the reception of the rite incur a very special danger. These two views led him to defer the rite as long as possible, yet be ready to grant it in extremities. He finds the custom of the Church in the way, and so seeks to work a revolution, showing thus ground for the remark of Mosheim, that he "lacked discretion and judgment."

(3.) The office of godfathers and godmothers had become an established fact at this time. He refers to such persons as well known, and as assuming a responsibility for the infant subjects of this rite well understood. Then the rite had been practised long enough to establish this prominent feature among the practices of the ancient Church. True, there were three classes of sponsors; but plainly he refers to sponsors for infants, who may make up a sad moral character, and so endanger those who promised for them at their baptism.

Whether he was orthodox or heterodox, consistent or inconsistent, in his own Church, is no question now with us. His historical declarations and allusions concerning this ordinance are all we want, and they are enough.

(4.) As he wished to dispense with this rite for infants, why did he not press the point, that it was only a human institution so far as infants are concerned? This would have been the best thing to be said by

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him to carry his point; and, as born within sixty years of a living apostle, he should have known, and doubtless did know, what was apostolic custom. In his work, De Baptismo, he makes no allusion to it as of human invention, when it was for the highest interest and conclusion of his argument to do so.

These extracts from the writings of this eminent father in the ancient Church cannot fail to make the single impression, that infant baptism was a rite generally accepted and practised at that very early day. We see not how one can take any other view of them, unless he comes up to the view out of a theory. And it shows the scarcity of material, and the frailty of the argument against this institution, when men quote Tertullian as opposing the rite as a novelty and an innovation. Even Neander says, "Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism, a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution, for otherwise he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it."[6]

On the contrary, his allusions to the practice are as to a rite generally accepted and used. He opposes nothing as new, and makes no attack on a specified innovation. Himself is the innovator, and urges the Church to change. With a strange interpretation of that saying of our Lord, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and with a notion of regeneration almost as crude as that of Nicode-

[6] Church History, i. 312.

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mus, he holds baptism to be indispensable to salvation, but considers one's salvation endangered by sins committed after he has received the ordinance. So early had the theory of baptismal regeneration, and the very dangerous nature of sins following, taken definite form in the Church, the outworking of which idea, two and three centuries later, we have already detailed. In accordance with these views Tertullian naturally and logically and devoutly urged the Church to change her custom of early baptisms, and put the rite as late for the subject as it could be safely. The baptismal garment was, as the ascension robe, to be put on so late that there would be the least possible danger of soiling it. Therefore, the very opposition of Tertullian to infant baptism, and the reasons for his opposition, show that the ordinance had then an established and well-grounded reputation and favor in the Church.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

IRENÆUS: "REGENERATED UNTO GOD."

IRENÆUS has a passage that must have great weight in this investigation, if it be evident, that, under the words he uses, he is referring to baptism. It may be said, in general, that Irenæus held fully to the dogma of man's total apostasy from God, and that his recovery is only through Christ. This recovery he often, if not generally, connects in time with baptism, calling it "the redemption," "the restoration," "the renewal," "the regeneration to a better life." He frequently couples regeneration with baptism; as already and thus early in the Church the notion was beginning to foreshadow itself, that baptism in itself is operative and efficacious to aid the new birth and insure salvation. The passage in question is a reference he makes to Christ, in his work "Against Heresies."

"Being, therefore, a master, he had the age of a master; not reprobating nor rising above man, nor violating in himself his own law for the human race, but sanctifying every period of life, through the resemblance there was to him in it. For he came to save all by himself; all, I say, who by him are regenerated unto God: infants and little ones, and children

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and youth and seniors. Therefore he came through each several age, — being made an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a little one for little ones, sanctifying those of that age, at the same time giving them an example of piety, justice, and subjection; a youth for youths," &c.[1]

Whether this passage is pertinent or not, as evidence in this investigation on the early use of infant baptism, turns on the meaning of the phrase, "regenerated unto God," — *renascuntur in Deum.* It is obvious to remark, that to speak of infants as regenerated unto God, meaning thereby the new birth spiritual as connected with the ordinary means of grace, is a very unusual expression. Such a term would be proper only in connection with the theory of baptismal regeneration.

A wide context in Jewish usage, in the apostolic and previous age, and among the early fathers, can alone determine the meaning of Irenæus in this passage.

The Jews were accustomed, in New Testament times and before, to call the baptism of a proselyte his "regeneration," his "new birth," or his "being born again."

[1] Magister ergo existens magistri quoque habebat ætatem, non reprobans nec supergrediens hominem, neque solvens suam legem in se humani generis; sed omnem ætatem sanctificans per illam quæ ad ipsum erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semet ipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem; et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes, in parvulis parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes ætatem; simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus, et justitiæ et subjectionis; in juvenibus juvenis, etc. — Lib. ii., c. 22, § 4.

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These Jewish synonyms for baptism have their origin in times preceding the Christian, and they grow out of the Jewish idea of proselyte baptism. According to the theory and practice of the Jews, baptism converted a Gentile into a Jew: it made him the citizen of another nation; it changed his nationality. It was to the Gentile a second nativity, a new birth civil. As to citizenship he was "born again." So the Rabbies called a proselyte, at baptism, *recens natus*. And Maimonides says, "Gentilis proselyta factus; ecce est ut infans jam natus."

When, therefore, we come down from those earlier Jewish times into the Christian and New Testament period, and have occasion to speak of persons as changing their spiritual nationality, these old Jewish and proselyte forms of expression need only to be spiritualized to convey the idea. One abjures the ruler of the darkness of this world, and becomes a subject in the kingdom of God's dear Son. He becomes as "a little child" in doing it. After doing it he is as a "new-born babe:" "modo genitus infans." —*Vulgate*. As to his new king, kingdom, and citizenship, he is "born again," "renatus denuo." —*Vulgate*. The Jew saw fit to mark the changed nationality of the Gentile by the symbol of baptism, and the proselyte was *natus ex aqua* into the Jewish commonwealth. And to every Gentile proposing this civil change into Judaism the Sanhedrim said, with inexorable words, "Verily, verily, we say unto thee, except a Gentile be born of water he cannot see the kingdom of Israel."

Here were, then, in the Holy Land, and in the

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times of Christ, a symbolic ceremony, and a verbal expression for it, in common use and well understood. The idea set forth therewith was worldly, carnal, and hardly semi-religious; for the act brought the Gentile only toward the Church and not into it.

For those about to exchange nationality and citizenship, the Lord Jesus desired a ceremony, a symbol, and an expression of it. He had already taken, and was about to take, very many Jewish rites, ceremonies, symbols and phrases, and Christianize them for the new form of his old Church. Without, therefore, introducing a new rite, and an obscure confusing terminology, he simply elevates this common ceremony, symbol, and phrase of the Jews, and fills the whole with a spiritual import.

Hence, easily and naturally, and divinely too, those synonyms for baptism have come into the New Testament: "Born again," "born of water," "washing of regeneration." They imply the visible, physical ceremony of baptism; while they carry an import that is spiritual, and infinitely more than the visible.

These synonyms for baptism of course re-appear in the Vulgate Latin Bible of the second century, and for St. John iii. 5, we have "nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua;" and for Titus iii. 5, we have "per lavacrum regenerationis."[2]

These Jewish synonyms for baptism appearing in the Greek of the New Testament, and re-appearing in the Latin Vulgate, they will of course be repro-

[2] "The laver of regeneration: a reference to baptism which might all the more easily be exhibited as a *laver*, λουτρόν etc."—LANGE *in loco.*

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duced with variations by the Christian writers immediately following the apostles. Enough has, therefore, been said to show the meaning of Irenæus in the phrase in question. Still, to set forth the conclusion very clearly, we will quote additional testimony.

Justin Martyr lived in the times of Irenæus, having been born about A.D. 114. No writings of the second century, now extant, are of more worth to Christian history; and his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, is the first systematic treatise to win that ancient people to Christianity. In one of his Apologies he thus speaks of baptism, and of the process of uniting with the Church: —

The candidates "are led by us to some place where there is water; and after the manner of regeneration by which we were regenerated, they are regenerated. In the name of God, the Father and Governor of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they are washed with water. For Christ said: 'Except ye be regenerated ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven.' 'And we have received from the apostles this reason for this' [rite]. 'There is pronounced over him who wishes to be born again, and has renounced his sins, the name of God, the Father and Governor of the universe; and he who conducts the person to the laver to be washed, calls him by this name only.'" [3]

[3] *Ἔπειτ ἄγονται ὑπ' ἡμῶν ἔνθα ὕδωρ ἐστὶ, καὶ τρόπον ἀναγεννήσεως ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ανεγεννήθημεν, ἀναγεννῶνται. Ἐπ' ὀνόματος γαρ τοῦ Πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων καὶ Δεσπότου Θεοῦ, και τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ και Πνεύματος Ἁγίου ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται. Και γὰρ ὁ*

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Clemens Alexandrinus was contemporary with Irenæus, and would be quite likely to use the same technical phrases, and with the same import as Irenæus. In his controversy with the Gnostics he has occasion to use the baptismal terms; for that sect added so much to the simple rites of baptism as sometimes to make the converts to a pure Christianity feel that they had not received baptism enough to be complete Christians.

We take only sentences enough from the argument of Clement to show his use of the words in question. "Immediately on the baptism of the Christ, a voice from Heaven declared him beloved. — Being regenerated, was Christ at that very time perfect; or, as a most wicked thing, will it be said that he was yet lacking? — As soon as baptized by John he becomes perfect. — He is perfected by the washing, and sanctified by the descent of the Spirit. — He having been regenerated immediately obtained a completeness. — One having been regenerated, as in fact it is called, and having been enlightened, comes at once into a new state." [4]

Χριστὸς εἶπεν: *Ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, κτλ.* — *Apol. Prim. ad Anton. Pium*, c. lxi.

"And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration." — *Do.*, c. lxvi.

[4] *Αὐτίκα μεν βαπτίζομένῳ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπήχησε φωνὴ μαρτυς ἠγαπημένου.* — *Σήμερον ἀναγεννηθεὶς ὁ Χριστὸς ἤδη τελειὸς ἐστιν; ἢ ὁσπερ ατοπωτατον, ἐλλειπής;* — *Ἅμα τοίνυν τοῦ βαπτίζεσθαι ἀυτὸν ὑπό τοῦ Ιωάννοῦ, γίνεται τέλειος.* — *Τελειοῦται δὲ λουτρῳ καὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος τῃ καθόδῳ αγιάζεται.* — *Ἀναγεννηθέντες, εὐθέως το τέλειον ἀπειλήφαμεν.* — *Ὁ μόνον ανναγεννηθεὶς, ὡσπειροῦν καὶ το ονομα ἔχει, καὶ φωτισθεὶς, ἀπήλλακται μὲν παραχρημα, κτλ.* — *Pædagog.* Lib. i. c. 6.

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Obviously the "perfection," the "completeness," the new state, here spoken of by Clement, is not spiritual, but ritual. And he is arguing to show that baptism, simple as Christ's, introduces one fully into Christian relations and privileges, as naturalization makes one perfect in citizenship. In doing this, he uses baptism and regeneration as synonyms. Either word takes in wholly and measures exactly the meaning of the other. Evidently, it was a matter of indifference which word he used to express the rite; and he used the two interchangeably for variation in style. "Being *regenerated*, was Christ at that very time perfect?" "As soon as *baptized* by John he became perfect." The use of these two words here, as referring to that one and the same act at the Jordan, cannot be mistaken.

Here it should be now carefully noted, that for the last eighteen years of the life of Irenæus, he and Clement were contemporary. If, therefore, the meaning of Irenæus, in the phrase, "regenerated unto God," be at all in the shade of doubt, this most bold side light of Clement, his Christian neighbor and co-worker, must make it clear, beyond question. These quotations from Clement come in to explain, as the Madison Papers on phrases in our National Constitution.

Tertullian casts more light on this passage from Irenæus, though it is later, and more distant. He was born about forty years after the death of Clement, and of course would inherit more or less the theological phrases of the preceding age.

In his discussion of baptism he says, —

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"It is agreed that no one obtains salvation without baptism, according to the noted saying of our Lord: 'Except a man be born of water he cannot be saved.' The law of baptizing is imposed and the form given. 'Go,' said he, 'teach the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' To this law it is added: 'Except one be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' This bound one's faith to the necessity of baptism. Therefore, afterward, all believers were baptized."[5]

It is not needful to quote further from Tertullian to show his use of these synonyms for the baptismal rite.

Origen indulges in the same phraseology for baptism as Irenæus and Clement. Commenting on what Christ says of offending the little ones, and of their angels, he raises the question, when the angelic can commence in the life of the little ones: —

"Whether they assume the oversight of them at the time of the washing of regeneration, by which they are born again, . . . or from their birth," &c. Again, on the passage: "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration," he says, "In the regenera-

[5] "Præscribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem, ex illa maxima pronunciatione Domini, qui ait: nisi natus ex aqua quis erit, not habet salutem. Lex enem tinguendi imposita est, et forma præscripta: Ite, inquit, docete nationes, tinguentes eas in nomen Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Huic legi collata definitio illa, nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu, non intrabit in regnum cœlorum; obstrinxit fidem ad baptismi necessitatem. Itaque omnes exinde credentes tinguebantur. — TERTULL., *De Baptismo.* c. xii.

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tion by the laver, every one, born again of water and of the Spirit, is free from stain." [6]

Cyprian's use of the words under consideration, and of their synonyms, makes it quite pertinent to call attention to a few of his expressions. Cyprian was born, probably, while Irenæus was yet alive.

In his epistle to Donatus, giving an account of his own conviction and conversion, he says, —

"I thought it a very difficult and hard thing for me, with my habits, that which the divine favor promised for my salvation, to wit, that any one could be born again, and that, animated to a new life by the laver of the saving water, one could put aside what he had formerly been." [7]

"But after the washing away of the stain of a former life by the aid of the regenerating water, it poured light from above on the expiated and pure heart." [8]

"It seems, also, a foolish thing, since that second birth is spiritual by which we are born unto Christ through the laver of regeneration," &c.[9]

[6] Πότερον δεξάμενοι την οἰκονομίαν περὶ ἀυτοὺς διοικεῖν ἀφ' οὐ διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, ᾧ ἐγενήθησαν . . . ἢ ἀπὸ γενέσεως. — Κατα δε τὸν λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίαν πᾶς μετὰ καθαρὸς ἀπὸ ῥύπου ὁ γενηθεὶς ἄνοθεν ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος. — *Comm. in* Matt. xviii. 10, xix. 28.

[7] Difficile prorsus, ac durum pro illis tunc moribus opinabar, quod in salutem mihi divina indulgentia pollicebatur, ut quis renasci denuò possit; utque in novam vitam lavacro aquæ salutaris animatus, quod priùs fuerat. exponeret. — Epis. 1, ad. Don. § 3. [In the Oxford edition this Epistle is put among the Treatises of Cyprian.]

[8] Sed postquam undæ genitalis auxilio superioris ævi labe detersa, in expiatum pectus ac purum, desuper lumen infudit. — Do. § 4.

[9] Illud quoque ineptum, ut cum nativitas secunda spiritualis sit, quâ in Christo per lavacrum regenerationis nascimur, etc. — Ep. lxxiii. § 5. Ox. ed. lxxiv.

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"But if regeneration is in the laver, that is, in baptism," &c.[10]

"For the second birth, which is in baptism, begets sons of God, &c.[11]

"As in the laver of the saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by alms and good works the flame of sin is quenched. And because once, in baptism, the remission of sins is granted," &c.[12]

Many more passages, probably a score, could be cited from Cyprian, to show that he used phrases similar to the one under examination from Irenæus to express baptism. Yet why increase the citation of witnesses? All the sons of Jacob were not summoned to prove the identity of Joseph. Let the case, therefore, be brought to a close.

It does not seem needful to surround this phrase of Irenæus, *renascuntur in Deum infantes et parvulos*, etc., with a wider context for interpretation. It plainly appears to have been the usage of the times to express baptism, baptizing, and the baptized, by the terms regeneration, regenerating, born again, born of water, &c.

We are the slower to take the ancient meaning and spirit of such phraseology, because we now commonly connect the saving and divine work of the

[10] Si autem in lavacro, id est, in baptismo, est regeneratio, etc. — Do. § 6.

[11] Secunda enim nativitas, quæ est in baptismo, filios Dei generat, etc. — Ep. lxxiv. § 14. Ox. ed. lxxv.

[12] Sicut lavacro aquæ salutaris Gehennæ ignis extinguitur, ita eleemosynis atque operibus justis delictorum flamma sopitur. Et quia semel, in baptismo, remissio peccatorum datur, etc. — CYP. *De Opere et Eleemos.* § 2.

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Holy Spirit with regeneration. It means with us that radical moral change and creative act of God by which one becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. But it is in comparatively modern times that the word has come to have that meaning in theological terminology. Anciently it was not so.

There is another theory of interpretation for the passage. It is said that Irenæus teaches in his works, that as Adam brought death to the human race, Christ brings life, and in that sense he is the regenerator of the race. All which is true, and many passages culled from his writings show this.[13] But, so far as appears, Irenæus does not elsewhere use the language in question to express the redeeming work of Christ.

This phrase, however, is a common expression with him for the baptismal ceremony, if not in identical, yet similar words, and of the same import. When introducing the commission of our Lord, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them," &c., he says, "And again, giving the authority for regeneration unto God to his disciples, he said," &c.[14]

This "authority for regeneration unto God" can be nothing else than the commission for baptizing. For to say that this commission implied authority to work any spiritual regeneration, is simply saying that a divine energy was then given to the apostles to create men anew in Christ Jesus.

Speaking of the blind man to whom Jesus restored

[13] Bib. Sacra, vi. 346–56.

[14] Et iterum, potestatem regenerationis in Deum demandans discipulis, dicebat eis, etc.
Adv. Hær. Lib. iii. c. 19.

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sight by the anointing and the washing in Siloam, Irenæus calls the washing figuratively, "the washing of regeneration," — lavacrum regenerationis, — and "that regeneration which is by the laver" — Eam quæ per lavacrum est regenerationem.[15]

While treating of the errors of the Valentinians, who greatly corrupted baptism, he says, that they worked "for the rejection of the baptism of regeneration unto God, and for the destruction of the whole faith."[16]

We have now come up, by a many-sided approach, to that doubtful phrase of Irenæus, *renascuntur in Deum, infantes*, etc. We have surrounded the passage by a wide context of other authors, living at and near the same time with him. They are the most competent interpreters, writing in the style of the age, and using its terminology. They leave us in no doubt whether, in those times, the words baptism and regeneration, were synonyms. They use them as such.

More than these interpreters, Irenæus is his own. The baptism which Christ empowered the apostles to bestow, he calls a "regeneration." The washing of the blind man in Siloam, he calls "regeneration by the laver." The Valentinian corruptions of this sacrament, he says, amount to the rejection of the "baptism of regeneration." Neander tersely says of this passage, "Regeneration and baptism are in Irenæus intimately connected; and it is difficult to

[15] *Do.* Lib. v., c. 15.

[16] Εἰς ἐξάρνησιν τοῦ βαπτίσματος τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀναγεννήσεως καὶ πάσης τῆς πίστεως ἀπόθεσιν. — *Do.* Lib. i., c. 18.

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conceive how the term 'regeneration' can be employed in reference to this age [of infants] to denote anything else than baptism." [17]

So near to the times of the apostles do we find this record of infant baptism. We can make nothing of the phrase, less or more than this. And this by a writer who was born within fifteen years, probably, of a living apostle. That leaves but a short space till we come to the baptism of the "household" of Lydia, and of Stephanas, and of the jailer.

[17] Ch. His. i. 311.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

HISTORIC SILENCE.

HERE we are met by an objection. If conceded that Irenæus refers to infant baptism in the passage just examined, and if conceded, as it is, that this is the earliest direct reference by Christian authors to this ordinance, there remains a period of about one hundred years between the death of the last apostle and the death of Irenæus, during which the writings of the fathers make no allusion to this institution. Those not accepting the ordinance call this an ominous historic silence, and they assume the position as one of great apparent strength. It is a wise assumption, for this is the last stand-point for them.

The objection made is, that, for one hundred years immediately following the apostolic age, the Christian writings furnish no allusion to the ordinance in question. We have given to the objection extra force by allowing a century to the period. It is probably much less; for Irenæus was born about A.D. 114, and suffered martyrdom, as is supposed, A.D. 202. His principal work as an author, against the Gnostics or Heresies, in which the passage in question occurs, was written during the reign of Commodus, who

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came to the throne A.D. 180. The ominous silence, then, may be only about eighty years.

The objection has some substance and much semblance, and we will consider it in particulars.

1. The rank or relative importance in which the New Testament left baptism should be regarded. The Lord Jesus himself never baptized.[1] Thus by his practice he gave fundamental truth an immense prominence above a ceremony. Saving faith, holy love, and consecration, the Christian life, — these were the main things with him. So the fruit were good and the tree vigorous, he did not personally attach a label. St. Paul had instruction into this very spirit and practice, to keep rites in the back-ground. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Hence the great apostle was no ritualist. He had seen and practised enough of the externals in Judaism. He gave his attention, as a Christian minister and scholar and writer, to doctrines and hearts and fruits. How he opens on the petty sects and strifes in the Corinthian church! He could not bear to see the great essentials of the Christian faith and life obscured, and crowded from their centre, by the merely nominal.

"I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. Besides these, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to ritualize, but to evangelize."[2]

Not that the apostle would undervalue a title, but

[1] John iv. 2. [2] 1 Cor. i. 14–17.

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would keep in its legitimate pre-eminence the substance to be entitled. Doubtless the stamp, or trade-mark, of the manufacturer is a good thing, attached to a finished and worthy article; but how immensely more important to make that article!

Under St. Paul's thanksgiving to God, that he had not baptized many, but left it, among minor things, to helpers and deacons, we would not expect the apostolic fathers to press this rite to the front in their preaching and writing. It was left for an age farther from the apostolic to make ceremonials outrank essentials, and push a ritual into an operative, and a label above the fruit on the tree.

2. Care must be taken, lest the objection of silence, belonging to the second century, borrow a strength from the nineteenth century. For it is hard for us, burdened by the prolific press of to-day, to judge in equity of the silence of history and the poverty of general literature, in an age thirteen hundred years before the invention of printing, and when new volumes on the Christian religion were so wide apart.

During the year 1873, one, to have kept up with the English press, American and foreign, in its copyright issues of volumes and pamphlets, must have read fifteen works a day. If he would have followed closely the press in the entire republic of letters, he must have read eighty works a day.

And, besides all this, there is the daily and weekly, the quarterly and occasional miscellany, the thick-strewn falling leaves of every hour from the tree

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of knowledge, that never aspire to the dignity of literary property in a copyright.

With the literary birth and culture and burden we have in this age, we take up a literary question of the second century, and unconsciously attempt to run into a bookstore at Rome or Athens, Corinth or Alexandria, to read up on the topic. Doubtless, men there would then have talked with us on the subject; but there would not have been interviewers, stenographers, reporters, and printing-presses, to transmit our discussions to the nineteenth century. Athens then did not publish "The Pan Optikon Daily," nor Rome "The Weekly Orbis Terrarum;" nor did Gamaliel then edit a "Bibliotheca Sacra" at Jerusalem, or Quintus, an "Ecclesiastical Quarterly" at Alexandria. No steamers then vexed the Ostia, the Piræus, the Bosporus, and the mouths of the Nile, with their burden of mail-bags. Locomotives were not then playing along both slopes of the Apennines and Alps; nor did telegraphic wires then click in the Parthenon, and stretch from the Acropolis to lands indefinitely beyond the Indian borders of Alexander. Ideas then travelled on foot, and Hoe's printing-press was preceded by only the inkhorn and parchment. With such means at their command for publishing, what literary remains could we expect from the Christian writers of that day?

3. The Christian scholars and authors in the second century were very few. What St. Paul said to the Corinthians, about the year sixty of our Lord, could have lost but little of its aptness about the year one hundred and sixty. "Ye see your calling, brethren,

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how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen."[8]

This is not a very hopeful beginning for Christian authorship in the second century, and for full alcoves in our Library of the Fathers. The historic fact, therefore, as given by Mosheim, as to the number and grade of the Christian writers of the first and second centuries, must not surprise us, while it must limit our expectations from the authors of those times.

In the age of the apostolic fathers he says, —

"It was not deemed so essentially requisite in a teacher that he should be distinguished for profound or extensive knowledge, either human or divine, as that he should be a man of virtue and probity, and, in addition to a due measure of gravity, be possessed of a certain degree of facility in imparting instruction to the ignorant. Had the apostles, indeed, thought otherwise, and directed that none but men of letters and erudition should have been elected to the office of presbyters, it would not have been possible for the churches to have complied with such a mandate; since, at that time, the number of wise and learned who had embraced the faith of Christ was but small, and, as it were, of no account. The Christian writers of the first century, consequently, were not many; and from the labors of the few, whose works have

[8] 1 Cor. i. 26–28.

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reached us, whether we consult such as have been handed down whole and entire, or such as carry with them the marks of interpolation and corruption, it is uniformly evident, that, in unfolding the sacred truths of Christianity to the world, the assistance of genius, of art, or of human means of any other kind, was but little, if at all, courted."[4]

It must not surprise us, therefore, in looking back through the eighty years or so between Irenæus, our last authority for infant baptism, and St. John, to find the number of authors very few, who wrote any thing for Christianity.

4. The reflection is a sad one, consequently, that any of those few writings should have been lost to the world. And the regret becomes the deeper, if the death of the witness and the loss of his affidavit be so used as to work against the claim to the fulness of the Christian system. The conceded loss of a collection of papers pertinent to the general issue, and the possible loss among them of one paper pertinent and important to the particular issue, should at least mitigate an adverse judgment. In the confessed loss of miscellaneous historic evidences, equity and candor would draw a wide margin for the unknown, that should be, at the least, neutral ground. In the court of moral equity, denial would not be allowed to exceed affirmation, as to the value of the loss.

It is with pain that the Christian scholar reads those references in Eusebius, to books of our earliest Christian authors, now evidently lost. It was about A.D. 130, that Quadratus, bishop of Athens, presented

[4] Mosheim's Com. vol i., 200, Murdock's ed.

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to Hadrian a written apology, or defence, of Christianity; but it has perished.[5] One of the philosophers at Athens, Aristides, embraced Christianity, and wrote a defence of it; and his work was extant in the seventeenth century, but is now lost.[6] Melito of Lydia wrote eighteen treatises on Christian topics; the loss of which we mourn the more, as one of them was on baptism.[7] Miltiades flourished as a writer while Irenæus was combating heresy, and published an Apology, now lost, with five other works.[8] Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, about A.D. 170, made valuable contribution to the Christian volumes now lost.[9] The same may be said of Hegesippus of Asia Minor, who, about A.D. 150, wrote five books of ecclesiastical memoirs.[10]

Nor should we know of these losses but for the incidental allusion to the books by Eusebius and others. How many of the few written perished without any recognition, and were left without monument, epitaph, or mound even, in "the waste howling wilderness" of paganism, through which Christianity came up to its promised land, will never be known. And when pressed denominationally by this ominous historic silence, and oppressed by it, as all ecclesiastical scholarship is, there is relief in thinking what might have been. For it is only technical justice that gains by the death of witnesses.

What might have been is painfully illustrated by the pagan persecution of Diocletian. This began

[5] Euseb. iv. 3. [6] Do. iv. 3. [7] Do. iv. 26.
[8] Do. v. 17. [9] Do. iv. 27. [10] Do. iv. 8, 22.

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A.D. 303. The edict of the emperor called for the destruction of all the Christian edifices. Every stone structure was to be pulled down, and every wooden one burned. It called also for the destruction of all the sacred books of the Christians; and the penalty of death hung over the magistrate who should be negligent, or the Christian who should be recusant of the edict. All parchments, papers, letters, and documents of any kind, kept in the churches, or in the houses of the bishops, were called forth, and given indiscriminately to the flames.[11]

And so, across the Roman empire, these vandal fires went, robbing the libraries of all coming time. "And hence," says Mosheim, "the history of Christianity suffered an immense loss in this Diocletian persecution. For all that had come down from the earlier ages of the Church, — the documents, the papers, the epistles, the laws, the acts of the martyrs and of councils, from which the early history of the Christian community might be happily illustrated, — all, or at least very much of them, perished in these commotions." [12]

How many years of vain study and unclosed argu-

[11] So Bassus, governor of Adrianople, says to Philip, the bishop: Legem Imperatoris audistis. . . . Vasa, ergo, quæcunque vobiscum sunt aurea, vel argentea; scripturas etiam, per quas vel legitis, vel docetis, obtutibus nostræ potestatis ingerite. The bishop, standing at the door of the church, with his assistants, complied in part, saying: Vasa, quæ postulas, mox accipe. Ista contemnimus. Non pretioso metallo Deum colimus, sed timore. The sacred books he would not give up. These Bassus violently snatched from their place, and burned in the forum. — MOSHEIM, *ut infra.*

[12] Mosheim's Com., ii. 422, *et seq.*, Murdock's ed.

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ment, and what sorrow in the world of letters, those fires of Diocletian inflicted!

After such devastation of Christian writings in the years 303 and following, we would not expect to find much remaining of the sacred authorship of the first and second centuries, specially if we remember that any little remnant, to reach our day, had yet to run the gauntlet of the ages, between pagans and Jews, infidels and Mohammedans.[18]

Well does Milton speak of this practice. After charging the Church and the Commonwealth "to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves," he says, "Yet, on the other hand, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book. Who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself,—kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. It is true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revo-

[18] This burning of unpopular books was a common resort, where brute force instead of argument prevailed, and where one found it easier to carry the opinions of his opponent to the stake, than his own convictions into the heart of that opponent. Thus, those early converts at Ephesus, under the preaching of St. Paul, brought together their books on magic, and burned them to the value of seven or eight thousand dollars.

Some twenty-five years later, under Domitian, this act of the Ephesian Christians was imitated by the Romans, in burning the works of unpopular authors. Neque in ipsos modò auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum sævitum, delegato triumviris ministerio, ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur. Scilicet, illo igne vocem populi Romani, et libertatem senatûs, et conscientiam generis humani aboleri, arbitrabantur. —TACITI AGRIC., § ii.

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lutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse." [14]

5. The small number of Christian treatises, prior to those of Irenæus, that remain to us. Ecclesiastical history is able to cite but eleven authors, whose writings are known to be extant, between St. John and Irenæus. And many of their treatises are exceedingly fragmentary, as showing a perilous escape through the ages. The larger number of the works, of even these eleven, have perished. The entire amount saved out of the Christian writings of the about one hundred years, covered by our review in this chapter, would make probably less than five hundred pages in Torrey's Neander. The English press of to-day is issuing that amount, under copyright, every three hours.[15]

6. Consider the topics that would naturally and necessarily come up for discussion, between the writing of the New Testament, where household baptism is mentioned, and the allusion to it by Irenæus, a

[14] Of Unlicensed Printing.

[15] The eleven accredited authors of the period under review are as follows: Clemens Romanus and his First Epistle; unknown author of The Epistle to Diognetus; Ignatius and seven genuine epistles to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnæans, and to Polycarp; Pastor of Hermas; Barnabas; Papias; Polycarp; Justin Martyr (not including the suspected Discourse to the Greeks, Hortatory Address to the Greeks, and On the Sole Government of God); Tatian; Athenagoras; Theophilus.

In discriminating between the authentic and the doubtful, we have followed, mainly, the editors of The Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

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little more than a century. What chance has infant baptism, even if in common practice, to gain the allusion of a single line?

Christianity had, naturally, a prominent struggle with paganism; and about one-fourth of all the writing mentioned as extant is devoted to this issue, to wit: The Epistle to Diognetus; the Plea for the Christians, and a Treatise on the Resurrection, by Athenagoras, the most scholarly and classic of all the Apologists; Tatian's Address to the Greeks; and the three Books of Theophylus to Autolycus.

In such discussions, one would not expect to find references to the sacraments, and holy days, and services of the Church. An argument of that nature, and with pagans, would not be likely to come down to routine. Hence, the fact that this one-fourth of all the Christian writings extant of that period makes no reference to the sabbath, to public worship, to the sacrament of the supper or of baptism.

The silence concerning baptism is, therefore, equally ominous concerning these other three marked features in the Church. This brief silence of history, the bare absence of testimony for the time being, must not carry the ecclesiastical jury; else we may lose out of the Church her sabbath, and public worship, and solemn memorial of our Lord's passion. An argument from the unknown has this liability of bringing one to unexpected and unwelcome conclusions. If there must be an argument over this silent section of history, one-fourth of the whole for the period in question, it must be by the logic of assumptions. Would it not

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be better to assume a position that will allow to us the baptism of children, than a position that will take from us the baptism of adults, the Lord's Day and congregational worship, and the communion of saints?

We have the brief epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians; but in it he makes no reference to the sabbath, baptism, the supper, or public worship. The same is true of the fragments that we have of the writings of Papias, one of the hearers of St. John. The first epistle of Clemens Romanus, the only well accepted one, has the same silence. Here are seven of the eleven Christian authors who wrote prior to the date of the celebrated passage from Irenæus; and they are all silent concerning the Christian sabbath, acts of public worship in the Church, baptism, and the sacrament of the supper. Why, then, should their silence on infant baptism be regarded as so significant and adverse?

Ignatius, who died not later than A.D. 116, makes one reference to public worship, two to the sabbath, five to the sacred supper, and four to baptism.

The pastor of Hermas, who flourished about A.D. 130, makes no allusion to the sabbath, or to public worship, or to the eucharist, and has two to baptism. In the epistle of Barnabas there is one reference. Justin Martyr, who was contemporary for a time with Irenæus, and who died A.D. 165, has no allusion to public worship, but one to the Lord's Day, three to the sacrament of the supper, and four to baptism.

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But let us make a further analysis. Of the eleven authors for the period, four only make reference to baptism of any kind. Their total references are eleven. Two of these are merely historical, as to John's baptism, and to Paul's "one faith and one baptism." Of the other nine references, only four are obvious and clear as cases of only adult baptism. The remaining five can be made cases of adult baptism only by bald declaration; and infant baptism can be excluded from them only by assumption. To declare and assume concerning them, is simply begging the question under investigation. We proceed to give the full text of these cases, using the translation of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

"Let us further inquire whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water [of baptism] and the cross. Concerning the water, indeed, it is written, in reference to the Israelites, that they should not receive that baptism which leads to the remission of sins, but should procure another for themselves." [16]

John's household baptism, and the commensurate relations of baptism and circumcision, will not allow us to restrict this passage to adults by a bald declaration.

"It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God. So that every thing that is done may be secure and valid." [17]

[16] Epistle of Barnabas, Ante-Nic. lib. i., 120.

[17] Ep. of Ignatius to the Smyrnæans. Do. p. 249.

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This passage would properly cover an infant or an adult, and cannot be monopolized by a theory. "Please ye Him under whom ye fight, and from whom ye receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply." [18]

The pertinence and power of this charge are the same, be the date and age of one's baptism what they may. The charge comports with infant as well as with adult baptism; and no fair exegesis can divorce it from the household, as of Stephanas, or of Lydia, or of the jailer. Assume, for a moment, the usage of infant baptism, and it will be seen that Ignatius is speaking aptly and practically.

In the quotation following, it will be noticed that a Gentile is addressing a Jew.

"Let us glorify God, all nations gathered together; for he has also visited us. Let us glorify him by the King of glory, by the Lord of hosts. For he has been gracious towards the Gentiles also; and our sacrifices he esteems more grateful than yours. What need, then, have I of circumcision, who have been witnessed to by God? What need have I of that other baptism, who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost."

"And we, who have approached God through Him [Christ], have received not carnal, but spiritual circumcision, which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it through baptism, since we

[18] Ep. of Ignatius to Polycarp. Do. p. 264.

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were sinners, by God's mercy; and all men may equally obtain it." [19]

Let it be here noted that the discussion is between a Jew and a Gentile. The Jew naturally and inexorably insists on the national and characteristic ceremonial of his people, when a Gentile comes in among the children, and into the Church, of Abraham. That ceremonial is circumcision, and Justin calls it also "that other baptism."

These representative men of two nationalities, and of two religious theories, cannot discuss the relative merits of circumcision and of baptism, without involving the relations of the children of believers to the Church.

All the proper candidates for circumcision, in the theory of the Jew, necessarily come into view with him in the discussion. The Jew cannot exclude from his mind the children of the proselyted or Christianized Gentile. And the reply of Justin may be presumed to meet this point in the mind of the Jew, and so meet the demand of his theory. The Jew says, "The Gentile, coming into church relations, must be circumcised." The Gentile replies, "What need have I of circumcision, who have been baptized?" The moment we place ourselves as listeners to their discussion, the question about children arises in our minds. It cannot be excluded.

We do not affirm that infant baptism is taught, or necessarily implied, in these passages from Barnabas,

[19] Justin Martyr. Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. Do. ii., 122 and 140.

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Ignatius, and Justin Martyr. We wish only to show the possibility of its being there, and that the probabilities are strongly in favor of the inference that it is there. The considerations advanced must at least rescue the quotations from a monopoly to a neutrality, and save the words of Justin from the assumption and assertion that they teach only adult baptism.

If this historic silence of a century or less is adduced in testimony, it is but fitting that the evidence be analyzed. If silence is brought upon the stand, and compelled to speak, we claim the right to cross-question. With some gratitude for the occasion given us, and with no anxiety about the verdict, we here dismiss this branch of the case.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

HISTORIC SILENCE OF THE JEWS.

THERE is another kind of historic silence quite as ominous as that which we have been analyzing. The tender and passionate interest of the Jews in all that pertained to the national, ecclesiastical, and religious privileges of their children, is proverbial. The very ancient promises, covenants, and prophecies of God were marked by intentions and phrases pertinent to posterity and the rights of childhood. It is "his household," "his seed," "his children after him," "thee and thy seed." Whatever blanks were left to be filled up variously, these phrases covering childhood interests were always imprinted in the divine document. All of the organic arrangements and covenant stipulations of God with his ancient people had a specific recognition of the children of believers. No point was more fundamental or vital in those early instruments of the theocracy. The dying echoes of the Old Testament system, and the opening prophecies of the New, are in the letter and spirit of this same point. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

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In answer to this final promise, in the last two verses of the Old Testament, there came Elijah, John the Baptist "preaching in the wilderness of Judæa; and there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan." "Nor do I believe this People," says Lightfoot, "that flocked to John's baptism, were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the nation, that they brought not their little children also with them to be baptized." "We suppose that men, women, and children came to John's baptism, according to the manner of the nation in the reception of proselytes."

It is well known that Judaism opposed the inauguration and development of the Christian dispensation at every possible point. The crucifixion of the Head was followed up by most persistent endeavors to destroy the body of believers; and the New Testament is marked by these Jewish attacks, and the Christian defences. Many of the Jews, who became devout Christians, still retained their national Judaizing tendencies; and only by council and epistle, and rebuke and forbearance, and the slow working of time, were they overcome.

Allow, now, for a moment, the omission of circumcision, and the non-admission of infant baptism, and it will be seen that the religious status of the child of the believer is greatly and even radically changed. To the Jew and to the Judaizing Christian this change in the relation of his child would be full of anguish and anxieties. All the covenant rights and expectations of a child in a family of God would be painfully endangered in the estimation of the parent.

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The childhood promises would be to him as a document unacknowledged and unsealed. There would be no covenanting, official, and organic connection of the child with the re-formed Church; and the contrast of the new with the old dispensation would in this respect be marked and alarming and provocative. How could the Jew overlook, or fail to attack, the new form of the Church in this weak place? How could the full Christian, yet semi-Jew, restrain himself at this ignoring of the children?

Studious for reasons to oppose Christianity, and under both Old Testament and traditional influences to guard the rights and interests of their "seed after them," they yet make here no point. The New Testament shows no controversy with a Jew over the status of the child in the reconstructed Church. No Jewish writing extant contains such a reference. Justin's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew is a systematic, elaborate, and extended argument to remove Jewish objections to Christianity, and commend the system to a hearty acceptance, as God's one and ancient plan of salvation. Yet, in the entire volume, there is no allusion to any objection or difficulty of this kind on the part of the Jews.

If there had been this organic change in the structure of the Church, and in the new form of it the child so left out of notice and care, could there have been a complete and unrecorded acquiescence? Is not this historic silence ominous of a fact, and strongly presumptive, that there was no Jewish opposition to record, because there was no such organic change in the structure of the Church that left the child out?

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

OUR historical disquisition is completed; and it may serve the common interest that truth has in this discussion to state the result of it in a few condensed sentences.

1. We opened this inquiry A.D. 412, because infant baptism is found to be the then universal usage in the Church. This was the initial year of the Pelagian controversy under the lead of Augustine, who declares the rite to have been received from the apostles.

2. In this controversy, infant baptism, as a rite, was incidentally forced into doctrinal relations to the very head of the question in dispute. Consequently, references to the rite by both disputants are full to an overflow. An American author on our questions of tariff and free trade, since the admission of Missouri to the Union in 1820, would not probably make more frequent allusions to slavery, as an existing and influential fact.

3. When not involved in dispute, we have seen that even voluminous writers among the early fathers have made only rare references to this ordinance. In his works preceding and following the Pelagian con-

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troversy, Augustine himself but seldom brings the point before his reader. Vincent, Theodoret, Isidore, and Jerome, of the age following Augustine, wrote extensively, and under the full practice of this ceremony; yet their allusions to it are only incidental and isolated. The reason is obvious. The practice being universal, and unquestioned in its authority, their pens could do better service on other themes. This fact becomes very important when the objection arises that there is no clear reference to infant baptism in the century immediately following the apostles.

4. We notice, that whenever an occasion calls for it, the references to infant baptism are sufficient. Those early authors, like the modern newspaper, discussed current questions. But for the Pelagian controversy, many chapters never would have been written on this rite in the fifth century, while, prior to that, the allusions of authors to it were only infrequent, as they were to the inspiration of the Scriptures, the sabbath, or the sacrament of the supper. For example, in A.D. 253, Fidus, an African pastor, comes before a council of bishops with a question of conscience, whether the infant may be baptized before it is eight days old. He thinks it may not; but his opinion receives a unanimous negative, the *nemo consensit*, of his sixty-five associates.

Here is an accidental revelation of an indefinite amount of historical fact on this matter. The simple question was a draft at sight, and promptly honored. Any historian would see, by this incident, that the usage was then universal, and that the Church at that time would have honored his drafts to any amount for

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facts and opinions in favor of Infant Baptism, as an accepted and practised sacrament. And the presumption is a fair one, that, if Fidus had put his question a century earlier, Cyprian's answer could have been written as many years sooner. Thus it is that accidents and incidents and side issues have given us fragments or specimens of what was apparently universal. If the body but show blood at any touch of the lancet, that is evidence enough that it carries it. It need not bleed alway and at every pore for proof.

5. The lack of historical reference here and there, and frequently to this ordinance in extant authors, is on the two common principles, — that daily occurrences fail of notice, and that unneeded is uncalled evidence. The routine of life, whether domestic, civil, or religious, does not ordinarily go into record, especially if the writers be few and the records brief, as in those early ages. It is rather the important, the irregular, and the extraordinary, the exciting interest of the time, that makes a passage in history.

6. In the first and simpler ages of Christianity, doctrine and life had pre-eminence over rites and ceremonies. An ordinance was not as much as a truth to those godly minds. It was left for the middle and later ages of formalists and sects to cultivate the mint, anise, and cummin of an overgrown ecclesiasticism, and express their sickly life in ritual phylacteries. After English swords and spears have plucked Magna Charta from King John at Runnymede, why should Englishman or American frequently recur to the fundamental ordinances in that document? Its few grand and vast principles have

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gone organic into national life. It is enough to assume without naming them, in the foregone conclusions and fore-ordinations of seven centuries, and attend to the great duty of using them in the national developments of our own day.

The heirs to a simple Church organization two thousand years old, with a modified sacrament in it, having, as was supposed, an apostolic approval, and with the great work on them of giving the doctrine and life of the Church to the world, why should they use many words on this common, simple, antique ceremonial?

7. The apostolical authority for infant baptism is not denied by those most deeply interested to deny it. Pelagius, Cœlestius, and others deny the doctrine of original sin. Yet, as one proof of it, the universal practice of infant baptism to wash it away is cited and urged. The Pelagians felt the force of no other argument as much. Augustine pressed it with an intense energy. The standing of Pelagius in the Church, and his reputation for the ages, were in peril. While yet alive, he and his heresy, so called, were arraigned before seven councils, and seventeen others discussed it afterward. And the practice of infant baptism in the universal Church was still urged as proof that Pelagius denied a universal tenet of the Church. Scholar as he was, and a traveller, familiar with religious life in Egypt and Palestine, as well as southern Europe, if a denial of the apostolic authority of this rite could have been made, he must have had the knowledge to do it. Certainly he had an intense interest to do it, were the denial historically possible. Yet he frankly admits

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that "he never had heard even any impious heretic or sectary deny it." And no one associated with him in this protracted struggle, and so overborne by the argument from this ordinance, ever intimated that it was a human innovation, and therefore of no authority.

8. We find historical evidences of Infant Baptism within about eighty years of apostolic times. The historical exegesis of the celebrated expression of Irenæus would seem to warrant this declaration. The *usus loquendi* of the several authors quoted to explain Irenæus shows a wide and common prevalence of the rite in times thus near to the apostles.

9. The silence of authors covering this less than a century between Irenæus and the apostles is no way surprising. Very many religious authors in our own age, as in all the Christian ages preceding, have failed to make any record concerning this rite. It is to be remembered that the great majority of Christian authors of former times, as of to-day, have given their pens to the spirit and life of religion, rather than to its emblems and rites. Moreover, the small number of Christian authors and their limited writings, and the pagan destruction of the writings, as of the authors, must lessen our surprise at this historic silence. Considering the unscholarly character of the Church in the second century, — not many wise men after the flesh, but the foolish things, the weak things, the base things of the world, — and the deadly heathen hostility to the few books written in the interests of the new religion, the wonder rather is that any record of that century remains from a Christian pen for the

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ecclesiastical historian of to-day. The pagans did not mean that any should be left, and they well nigh carried their point.

Considering the small number of Christian authors of the first two centuries, the small number of books written by them, the small number of even those that escaped the heathen persecutors, and the unimportant place of rites and ceremonies in primitive Christianity, we have left to us as much from those two hundred years as could be expected on Infant Baptism.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RELATIONS OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN TO THE CHURCH.

MUCH of the confusion of theory and of practice and of discussion on this question has arisen from a prior neglect to ascertain what is the constitution of the visible Church. On the premises and conclusions, scripturally opened, as we think, and closed, in the earlier chapters of this volume, the topic of the present chapter may be briefly disposed of.

The constitution of the Church, like the constitution and course of nature, we assume to be a divine arrangement. This point needs emphasis in both statement and acceptance, to guard against traditional and current errors. For often an organization is formed, where men take large liberty in following human policy or fancy or bias, as if organizing an agricultural club; and they adapt it to run in the historical rut of some provincial or sectarian interest, and then call that body a "church." The Church of God is otherwise, as being already organized, and of old. Its laws, therefore, like the laws of nature, are to be inquired into and ascertained, and then followed. The Constitution of the Church is not open to amendments, like the constitution of the United

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States; nor can any supreme ecclesiastical court get above it, and pass judgment on its original fitness. Human inquiry about it is limited to fact and import, and human liberty about it is limited to adoption.

The confusion of tongues and of usages, on the relation of the baptized child to the Church, has arisen from the unbounded license men have assumed to form religious organizations, and call them "churches." They vary among themselves almost as much as social clubs, or trade-guilds. The model of each is usually some other "church" of man, with variations to suit the "new church."

A number of believers come together, and organize what they call a "church." The manual of creed and covenant and by-laws makes quite a book. It embodies an elaborate theological system, as the Augsburg, or Heidelberg, or Westminster. Perhaps it is a provincial and awkward combination from several creeds and one or two leading minds, in which some pet philosophy or hobby, or the sharp angles of a temporary school, are the predominant features. The covenant and by-laws embody a code of Christian life, quite minute, and conservative or radical or ordinary, according to the tone of the leaders in the new enterprise. This code may all be very scriptural, and excites remark only by its position, as doorkeeper at the assumed Church of God. For how much more than conceded acceptance with God must be needed to make one acceptable as a candidate for this body! Think of adding, on some pentecostal occasion, and by fair examination and the intelligent assent of both parties, three thousand to

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this so-called "church." Think of five hundred of these as the average boy and girl of twelve years!

It must not surprise us, that, with rare exceptions, only adults are expected to unite with such bodies, and but few others do actually enter such "churches." The examination of a child, conceded to be Christian, in such a creed and code, on the presumption of an intelligent acceptance of the same, is repugnant to our ideas of fitness. We refrain from the incongruity, out of respect to our common-sense, in thus presuming that boys and girls are theologians because they are Christians. For this, as a leading reason, so few Christian children enter our churches. Failing as we do, to discover any efficiency or magical grace in an unintelligent response to Latin prayers, we cannot bring ourselves to enforce this intellectual and philosophical ritualism on our children. Better, and sufficient too, their experimental understanding of the love of Jesus, expressed in simple phrases. Well would the little child of God say with the great apostle, "In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

Or, the organization is not provincial, rustic, and modern, as the one supposed. Perhaps it is venerable with centuries, and continental in its enclosure of millions of communicants. Still it may go very wide of Biblical warrant and simplicity, as the one earthly house for the one family of God.

The Russo-Greek Church has lately declined fellowship in the eucharist with the Anglican church, because the latter is not in perfect accord with it in

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dogma, and does not accept unconditionally the authority and acts of the first seven œcumenical councils.

Such a body of religious membership and purpose, whether in an American village or in St. Petersburg, is so much other than the Church of God, that it becomes a mere association, order, guild, or club of the religious kind. When compared with that divine institution set forth in the Scriptures in its august simplicity, it so lacks resemblance that it would seem to be called a "church" by courtesy only.

It is these additions, subtractions, variations, and improvements, that human hands have presumed to make, affecting a divine institution, that so bewilder the believing parent on the relations of his baptized child to the Church.

What presumption in Moses, in building the tabernacle, to have assumed as great departures from the pattern shown in the mount, under the leading of ambitious architects and interested upholsterers! In entering such a modified and humanly improved tabernacle, the devout Jew may well have been in doubt whether the structure were the divinely arranged house of worship, or a theatre. Moses had no liberty, and took none, to vary the cubits of a curtain, or the number of the taches, the length of a board, or the color of a curtain-cord.

In the ecclesiastical history of the Christian dispensation, the first volume is The Acts of the Apostles. But neither the ordinary reader nor the extraordinary student finds there the doctrinal doors for admission that to-day open and close. There is

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a wide departure from primitive simplicity in this thing; and it is the departure that makes the confusion on the question under discussion. Indeed, that departure it is, that has necessitated the discussion. In the beginning it was not so. And, if one finds himself making criticisms adverse to the positions set forth in this chapter, it is suggested, that, on reflection, he would find himself unconsciously opposing positions taken from the New Testament, and opposing them by theories and practices introduced long after the New Testament was written.

It aids toward a just conclusion in this inquiry, to consider how the Christian Church, until comparatively lately, has been accustomed to treat the children of her communicants. Their relations to the Church have been held to be very intimate and tender and sacred; while the Church has felt a solemn and covenant obligation to them, and responsibility for them, such as she has felt toward no other class. She has exacted the highest possible vows for them from confessing parents, and then has herself assumed a care in their religious training and moral walk, that have marked the children of church-members, as in peculiar relations to her and to the outside world. As the great moral and religious educator, she has had her children as her primary pupils; and her system of teaching and preaching and text-books has had an elaborate adaptation to her infantile and juvenile constituency.

To one familiar with the routine of the old-Church work, this system so varied and complex, so comprehensive and yet minute, so simple in practice and yet

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so philosophical and profound in theory, is nothing less than amazing. In fundamental policy and compass and power, nothing now in use serves as an illustration or comparison, unless it be our national and omnipresent Sabbath-school system. And when we regard a systematic religious drill, for one definite end, in a proper church-line, this illustration is nigh to a failure. In which modern system, by the by, has not the God of Abraham come to the rescue of the children of the faithful? The Church having abandoned the original and divinely arranged plan, that her children should be her especial religious pupils, Providence seems to have allowed this outside and abnormal system to do what the Church has neglected to do. Perhaps a better illustration than our Sabbath-school system, of the care the ancient Christian Church assumed for her children, may be found in the religious *régime* of the Jews, which was personal, minute, comprehensive, vigilant, and exacting.

In alluding to this elaborate system of the old-Church for the training of her children, reference is not had to the Biblical and spiritual correctness of the work done, but rather to the correct conception the Church had of her organic constitutional obligation to do it, and to the fidelity and energy with which she has aimed to meet that obligation. Without judging of the quality of the work, so much of which must be disapproved, even as in the modern Sabbath-school system, this is to be said, — that, like Abraham her first earthly head, she has commanded her children and her household after her.

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Until quite late in the Christian centuries, the notion was universal, that the children of communicants belong to the Church for nurture, as the children of citizens do to the state. In the civil body, the child is, to an extent, the ward of the state for protection, culture, and development, as its invested interest. So, in the religious body, the child has been held to be a member immature, for tender care and guarded growth. In herself a self-propagating body, the Church, until lately, has been able to see that her growth, and even her perpetuity, have too vital a connection with her children to allow of their neglect. The question of privilege, right, and obligation on the part of the child, is a question of the child's growth in susceptibility. In other and broader words, it is the question of childhood universal, in the state, in the neighborhood, and in the family, as well as in the Church. This theory and practice of the old-Church, in regard to her children, is but an acceptance of the law of self-preservation, — a first law of organic being; and, when well applied, it proves itself worthy of the divine hand that wrought it originally into the constitution of his own spiritual family.

The modern and opposite notion, prevalent now in a small section of the Church, stands in striking contrast with this. Under the centrifugal force from monarchy to democracy, and from consolidation to individualism, and from papacy to independency, started two and three centuries ago, this section of the Church has resolved itself into an aggregation of individual adults. As a logical and fitting result, it

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has come to be managed on the grade, and in the interests, of adults. Its public religious services are not adapted to children, nor much expected to benefit them; while it does not provide, separately, any special and fitting means for their spiritual nurture. It is an organization of men and women, run in the moods and methods and interests of manhood and womanhood. It is as a high school, neither admitting primary scholars, nor contemplating a primary department. It stands aloof from the children of its members, as unfit to be taken into ecclesiastical relations, and incompetent to be made fit. If infant baptism is practised, it is as a perfunctory ritual, or beautiful ceremony. Little comes of it; nothing is expected of it; and nothing special is done with and for the subjects of it. The baptized children are not recognized as other than the unbaptized, unless by an occasional prayerful allusion. They are thus left to constitute their own religious standing. So far as organic and juvenile Church-work is concerned, they are left in painful waiting for maturity in youthful irregularities, for spasmodic and agonizing convictions, striking conversions, and abrupt gatherings into the Church. Single churches have done better, and taken care of their children with something of system and of success. In others, some relief from the total neglect has been found in maternal associations. More frequently a Sabbath-school has sprung up outside of the Church, and independent of it, to supplement the inside failure, reminding one of the foundling hospital for abandoned offspring.

The underlying assumption in this modern and in-

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novating theory is, that the parent has neither obligation nor right to enter into Church-covenant for the child, because thereby the perfect liberty of the child may by and by seem to have been contracted. Abraham has no right to circumcise an infant Isaac, because by and by an adult Isaac may complain of an infringement of his personal liberties. The assumption needs only an illustrated statement to be rejected. It is the doctrine of liberty, equality, and fraternity brought to the cradle. It requires that all questions of parental duty, domestic as well as ecclesiastical, be discussed in the nursery, subject to a popular vote, and the counting of all hands, however small. As well object to the establishment of social or educational or pecuniary relations for the child; for religious relations cannot stand alone liable to the objection. The baptismal covenant does not recognize the child as a party to it so much as the subject of it; and it binds the parent, and with the parent the whole Church is bound, to insure, as far as possible, for that child a pre-arranged and described character. The rejection of this principle is the dissolution of the family as a spiritual unit, into bald, isolated individualism. Family life as an organized, disciplinary, educating power, propagating its spiritual offspring by elements and laws within itself, and holding itself over and along from age to age, through Lois and Eunice and Timothy, is ignored.

On this theory of independency and individualism, a "church" is constructed. It is based on single adult persons, not families; on "thee," and not on

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"thee and thy seed." Additions are made to it by one and one, with no spiritual pedigree of antecedents or consequences. It is simply club-membership, with no recognition of parentage or posterity. Between such a body, and the Church of God, there is all the difference, and utility too, that there is between a heap of separate links and those same links interlocked into a chain. True, interlocking them infringes on their separate, inoperative existence; but it makes the chain of gracious forces with which God is girding the world.

We must, however, be looking to conclusions touching the relations of the baptized child to the Church. The points attained may be stated: —

1. The family is a divine unit. This is true of its natural constitution, development, and obligations to surrounding families. Until the children come to years of assent and dissent, the individualisms and independencies in the family are not as separate and marked as the persons. In the social, mental, moral, and religious life, the aliment, nurture, and growth are one. Life in these respects, in the family, is one stream flowing from a parental fountain, with as many undivided interests in it as the house has members. This family unit has forces, a constitution, laws, and methods, within itself, making it self-propagating and perpetuating, as a moral organism, like the fruit-tree of creation, "whose seed is in itself;" allowance always being gratefully made for the buddings and graftings of grace. So in the family, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and Timothy the son of Eunice, are legitimate children. The ethics and the theology of all

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this are well compacted into the homely proverb, "A chip of the old block." Hence society holds the neighbor, and the state the parent, responsible for his unadult children.

2. The Church is founded on such family units. In struggles for control, wise men gain possession, if possible, of organized centres of force, and the sources of power. The conquering general strikes for the cities, the fields of supply, and the leading fortifications. With their possession, all subordinate points come also. Treason tampers with head men, where, in the fall of one, a thousand fall; and he who is wiser than the legislator gains control of the teacher and text-book of the schoolroom. The last and weakest and unwisest power is the power that individualizes personally. It is too near the atomic to become constructive and comprehensive and monopolizing. But the power that individualizes by proxy, through control of generic centres, is greatest and wisest. It the nearest approximates monarchy, for good or ill. This principle is divinely utilized in the use of family units for the founding and increasing of the Church. A system of social, moral, and religious machinery, already constructed and running, and ever to run, embodying the only illustration obtainable of perpetual motion, God has appropriated for the human force in that spiritual organism which is to conquer totally, and work alway, the gates of hell never prevailing.

3. Gentile additions to the ancient Church were made by family units. What God said to Abraham at the founding, each of his successors said to each

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Gentile coming into the Church, — "thou and thy seed." During all the nineteen slow centuries before Christ, no jot or tittle of this law failed under the Jewish dispensation of the Church. The Gentile proselytes came in by families, so far as the children were under the "year of assent," as the Jews phrased it. And in the fulfilling of those many prophecies concerning the enlargement of the Church by the ingathering of the Gentiles, thousands of proselyte families came in on the faith and confession of the parents. "For so was the custom of the Jewish nation in their use of baptism, when a proselyte came in, his children were baptized with him; and all this upon this ground, that all that were related to the parent might come into covenant." Lightfoot makes this statement on the Jewish rule, as thus recorded in the Talmud: "Any male child of a proselyte, that is under thirteen years and a day, and any female child that is under twelve years and a day, must be baptized."[1]

4. The growth of the Church in the apostolic age was by such units. It was the household of Lydia, and of the jailer, and of Stephanas, which was added to the Church by the baptism of St. Paul. As the practice of household admission prevailed before the Christian dispensation, and up to that time, and as the New Testament shows cases of it, and nothing to the contrary, it may be presumed to have prevailed through the teaching and times of the apostles.

5. This increase of the Church by family units has been a marked feature in its growth from apos-

[1] See chap. xi.

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tolic times to very late centuries. The historic continuity of this usage shows in bold outline through all the branches and schisms of the Church, orthodox and heterodox. Taking into account the thirty-seven centuries of God's one Church, the opposite is as a novelty of a few years, while its extent is as limited as its years.

It is, of course, understood, that from time without date, even back into apostolic days, baptism has admitted to the Church. While prior to that, in the Jewish period, baptism constituted the proselyte a member of the commonwealth only, like naturalization papers with us, yet it was only preparatory to the invariable consequents of circumcision and a sacrifice, that constituted the subject a Church member. With the female proselyte, the sacrifice consummated the relations to the Church.

In the Christian era, the earliest Church records show that baptism constituted Church membership without regard to age. The immaturity of the member, and inability to understand and embrace it, in no way destroyed the fact that the baptized infant had obtained complete membership by baptism. As soon as the rite was finished, the subject received the eucharist. This was the *τὸ τέλειον*, the ritual perfecting of membership. Not only the adult, but the infant, received it immediately after baptism.

The fathers are clear and full on this point. In his treatise concerning the apostates, Cyprian (A.D. 244–258) makes some of the children whose parents fell away under persecution speak thus: "We did nothing: we did not of our own accord forsake the

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bread and cup of the Lord for profane rites. The neglect of others ruined us: our parents destroyed us. They deprived us of the Church as a mother, and of God as a father." Here Cyprian refers to the fact that the parents apostatized, and went to heathen altars to sacrifice, carrying their baptized infants with them.[2]

Augustine frequently and variously makes the same point and proof of full infant membership. "We do not hear the Lord saying this concerning the sacrament of baptism, but concerning the sacrament of the holy supper itself, which none but the baptized may approach: Unless ye eat my flesh, &c. Dare any one say that this teaching does not pertain to little children, and that they can have eternal life without partaking of his body and blood?"[3]

Gennadius, a presbyter of Marseilles, who flourished A.D. 495, speaking of the baptized, says, "If they are infants, let those who bring them respond for them after the manner of baptism; and, being confirmed by the imposition of hands and the anointing,

[2] "Infantes quoque, parentum manibus vel impositi vel attracti, amiserunt parvuli quod in primo statim nativitatis exordio fuerant consecuti. Nonne illi, cum judicii dies venerit, dicent: nos nihil fecimus, nec, derelicto cibo et poculo Domini, ad profana contagia sponte properavimus Perdidit nos aliena perfidia; parentes sensimus parricidas." — CYP., De Lapsis, § 9.

[3] "An vero quisquam etiam hoc dicere audebit, quod ad parvulos hæc sententia non pertineat, possintque sine participatione corporis hujus et sanguinis in se habere vitam?" — AUG., de Peccator. Merit, Lib. 1, Cap. xx.

Also, "Infantes sunt, sed membra ejus fiunt. Infantes sunt, sed sacramenta ejus accipiunt. Infantes sunt, sed mensæ ejus participes fiunt, ut habeant in se vitam." — AUG., Serm. clxxiv. § 7, ed. Paris, 1837; or Serm. viii., De Verbis Apostoli.

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let them be admitted to the mysteries of the eucharist."[4]

It were needless to add more quotations, though they could be much multiplied. As it is evident that the Church baptized, from the earliest Christian ages, the children of her members, it is alike evident, that, for six or eight centuries from Cyprian, she gave to those children the communion of the Supper. This privilege is the highest evidence of complete and total membership in the Church.

Of the error of the fathers in this matter of infant communion, from which the Catholic Church recovered in the ninth century and later, it is not needful to speak. It has been cited only as evidence of infant church-membership. The line of inquiry does not lead us to point out and criticise the abuses of that divine relationship.

It is in evidence, therefore, that in the Abrahamic constitution of the Church, in Gentile proselytism to it, in apostolic additions, and in its increase under the fathers down to very late years, the children of believers have been brought into membership. Considering the question scripturally, historically, and logically, we find the baptized child in the Church.

[4] "Si parvuli sint, respondeant pro illis qui eos offerunt, juxta morem baptizandi, et sic manûs impositione et chrismate communiti, eucharistæ mysteriis admittantur." —GENNAD., De Dogmat., Eccles. Cap. 52.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE POSITION OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH.

MAY full privileges be had without any other or more formal recognition? Are they to come to the communion? Are they liable to discipline? May they take part in the government of the Church? Are evidences of regeneration indispensable to the completion of all the rights of membership? Failing in these evidences, may they be excommunicated? These are not unnatural questions from a candid inquirer, whose views on the subject are yet unsettled.

It is pertinent here to assume and declare that baptism, in and of itself, has no efficacy. It is no rite in spiritual magic, to work a radical moral change in the subject. The touch of baptismal fingers is not ictic and efficacious for any such result, according to the figment of the highest ritualist. It is only the signature to a promissory compact. It is as the signing of the papers for the construction of a continental railway. The signing does no work on the road: it only pledges competent parties to see the work done.

1. It is to be noted primarily and prominently that

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the position of this child is divinely arranged. The organism and workings of an institution, that has done more than any other to mould and control this world, have brought the child into that position. God shaped that institution to do that thing; and the child is now, by baptism, in the place and surroundings of God's intention.

2. Moreover, the propagating power of grace is recognized and utilized in this position. Whatever forces there may be presumed to be in parental and family and church piety, they are concentrated at the very point where God has placed the child. It is in the very focus of religious warmth and power. Allow what we may or must for imperfections and infelicities within church relations, there are as few in no other earthly circle. There this child, unconscious, slowly coming into a mental and moral life, its infancy the best symbol of weakness, impressible, plastic, impotent, is placed to be moulded and nurtured into a child of God. It is placed helpless in the strongest current of grace that flows across this earth, to be swept heavenward. The place is exceptional by just so much as the Church differs from the outside world in power to train religiously. The rite locating the child thus is no æsthetic ceremony merely, of which the best and most has been said when it is called "touching" and "beautiful."

3. God expects to do much for this child in particular. The converging of his plans at this point silently enunciates this expectation. All the divine antecedents are as preparations; and the constitution of his Church has from the beginning contemplated

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and anticipated that child at that formative period. Then, his covenant with the parent enables him to do more and better for that child than he can for an outside child. With him, as with man, system and plan are moral insurance toward success. These infant members of the Church are his primary school in which he has arranged a foreordaining drill for all the mortal years of these children. When it is considered how seldom a Jew or a Papist becomes a pervert, we see how effectually this divine plan may be used, even when alienated to purposes so ceremonial and unspiritual. Much more, when so used for spiritual ends as to retain the divine co-operation, and the moral and religious elements are stimulated and subsidized, must it become a primal force in the regeneration of the race.

4. If received and cared for by the Church in the spirit of this plan, the child is baptized into a reasonable expectation of regeneration and heaven. Certainly no earthly surroundings could be more favorable were the end an ambitious worldly one. The condition is highly hopeful for early piety; and with any due regard for the covenant, and for the filling of the obligations on the human side, the conversion of the child may be confidently expected. Indeed, these "little ones" are to be held tenderly and prayerfully and workfully in the hands of the Church, as presumptive communicants. Any thing less than this has dark shadings toward lack of faith as a contractor, and lack of work, and so breach of contract. At this very point it is, where the human party has so often failed to carry out its agreement, and so the

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divine and perfect plan has been brought under reproach. The child has been baptized, perhaps ostentatiously and under admiration, and then let alone ecclesiastically. Of course in such cases infant baptism is a nullity, and comes under sectarian or worldly reproach. So, to speak to a business ear, the contract is signed with publicity, and then not really thrown up, but thrown aside. This is as if the pen that signed the Emancipation Proclamation were to be sacredly treasured, and the four millions of the document left to neglect and forgetfulness. The sign manual of the United States is of little account to them, if that is the end of it.

5. The Church should entertain thoroughly the fact of infant membership. If one find it difficult to accept this position, it is well that he inquire whether his difficulties are grounded in the Bible, or in some book more recently written and published. We come unconsciously under traditions and usages that make void divine arrangements. It may be so in this case. With all reasonable latitude conceded for denominations on questions of polity, it must be understood, that, in the two fundamentals of the Church, — creed and membership, — its type must everywhere be one; for those two features are primeval, organic, and divine. No by-laws of the village "church," or sectarian hand-book, or Bibliothèque Royale, may derange what the one Church Manual of God has arranged on these two points.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE NEGLECT OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN BY THE CHURCH.

BUT one finds a difficulty in treating a child as a church member, because it cannot share all the privileges and responsibilities of membership. Is the objection well made? That child has full family membership. It has also full national membership. Let it but lay claim in Austria to American citizenship, and the entire force of the United States will back the claim, "by the utmost exertion of the power of the republic, military and naval."[1] The freshman has full membership in the college, but not therefore the privileges in full of the senior. Does not the objection in question lie broadly against childhood as undistinguished from manhood? Membership for the child in the family and in the state is both instant and total in the outset. It is an end, accomplished at the beginning. Why may it not be so in the Church under its present constitution? When his father had said, "His name is John," and the infant had been circumcised, John the Baptist had membership in full in the Church of God. Ceremonials afterward enlarged only his privileges. Mem-

[1] Webster's Hülseman Correspondence, Works, vi. 501.

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bership in the Church, as in the family and in the state, has not growth.

The difficulty under consideration arises from a failure to separate between membership, and the privileges and rights and duties of membership. The former is an act instant, complete, and final; the latter, a matter of age, growth, and susceptibility. The minor is a citizen; but he cannot vote, and is not liable to military duty till of a certain age. The female is a citizen, but is not liable to bear arms, and does not vote at any age. The child of four years finds his duties and privileges in the family very different from those of his brother of sixteen years; yet the membership is equal. Suppose some sect in the state, Utopian and radical, should object to the theory and practice of infant citizenship, on the points that the infant cannot be a conscious party to an arrangement that makes it a subject of the government; cannot come to the polls with its oldest brother and father; cannot be drafted into the army; cannot be eligible to office, and so on and on. It will be noted that the objections are against being an infant. Infant citizenship remains as a profound reality for the unconscious babe; and the state makes it an intensely practical fact for the child, in all that pertains to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" commensurate with the years of the child.

It is seen at a glance, that the objection now under consideration, if well taken and sustained, reaches beyond the Church, and unsettles relations and memberships of childhood that long since passed into civil and social axioms.

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But another difficulty arises. If infant church-membership be conceded, one finds impediments and inconveniences in treating "these little ones" as the children of the Church, and in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Very like. Obedience to God is usually attended with impediments. The Decalogue, and the Sermon on the Mount, when brought to practice, have been always found open to the same objection. The proper training of children is not a total luxury; and, indeed, some do regard them as incumbrances.

It can be readily seen, that the easy, comfortable theory of adult membership would need reconstructing for a vast amount of Church work now left undone, if the children of believers were to constitute the juvenile school of the Church.

In modifying the theory and practice of Church work in the line indicated, there must come in a systematic labor for the young. When it is considered, that about one-half the community are minors, and are in the formative period for character, and that afterward moral teaching and influences avail mostly for confirmation, and but lightly for reversal in radical changes for good or evil, is it asking too much that one-half the moral and religious teaching of the Church be in the interests of the young?

Yet, as it now is, how rare the Church service, in prayers and teachings, that is adapted to interest and benefit children! The ornate essays, doctrinal and philosophical and controversial discussions, and the seminary sermons, all courteously called preaching, find but poor reception and response with a large

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portion of the adults. If the hungry sheep look up unfed, how must it be with the lambs? And, when the shepherd does propose to feed the lambs, how the sheep flock about him!

It has been suggested that a fourth year be added to the present theological course in our seminaries. Instead of giving it to philology, ontology, neology, and Ægyptology, suppose it be devoted to a department of Juvenile Theology, with the homiletic and pastoral as subdivisions. Such a man as was once the eminent rhetorical professor in one of our Eastern seminaries should not be a candidate for the new chair. When about to preach, on notice, to a New-York congregation of children, he began by saying, "When I am through, I shall want you, my dear children, to give me an abstract of the discourse. You know what abstract means? It is synonymous with synopsis." If Hannah, when she made the "little coat" for Samuel, had gotten up an overcoat for Elkanah, she could not have gone wider of the measure of the boy. What cutting and fitting of spiritual garments for children in our pulpits! What capacious arm-sizes, baggy and dangling sleeves, with vast and solemn latitude and longitude of skirts! When the little fellows, after the benediction, leave the church-door, and assay to go, if they try to carry the sermon they move off staggering like David in Saul's armor. It is all "synonymous with synopsis" to them. If any thing could reconcile us to a woman in the pulpit, it would be that Hannah might "from year to year" make a "little" coat for every consecrated Samuel in the congregation.

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There is a lamentable failure in appreciating childhood as an age vastly important, and susceptible of the moulding power of the Church. The quiet, easy neglect, the waiting till false religious notions are formed, and sinful propensities and habits are boldly marked, is amazing. Yet why amazing, if baptized children are not expected to receive proper training, and become converts and communicants? It is too much with the Church as with the state, that appears to have little to do with Cain till he has killed Abel.

It is painfully understood that the vast work of the state in her criminal processes is largely the undoing of mistakes, the defence against evils, and the punishment of crimes, that have their beginnings far back in a neglected and abused childhood. It is for the Church to be made wise by this sad fact, and administer her divinely assigned work under the warning of it. When Jericho was blighted and wretched from bad water, the man of God "went forth unto the spring of the waters," and healed them at the fountain. Very like he did this great work in a rural district and in an obscure place; but that was better than purifying some now and then at so much a glass, retail, in a splendid establishment on Jericho Park.

Our fine ministerial culture, and great sermons, and artistic music, and beautiful church architecture, are not reaching the children. The safety hydrants are all very well, and silver-plated, but in private houses. Men of God are needed, with new cruses, at the spring of the waters, to do wholesale work for all Jericho.

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When Xavier was making his triumphal procession in the conversion of Asia to Jesuitism, his labors were intensely exhausting, and his hours for sleep few and uncertain. Yet he took his broken rest under this standing order to his attendant: "If a child calls to see me, wake me." The conversion of half a continent lay in the wisdom and spirit of that order; and three centuries attest the fidelity and success of the man who could not sleep when a child wished to speak to him. Our ministry needs greater wakefulness, and a quicker ear for the calls of childhood. Too many of them, it is to be feared, are like Choate, lying in his last chamber, and overlooking the sea at Halifax: "If a schooner or sloop goes by, do not disturb me; but, if there is a square-rigged vessel, wake me up."[2]

But it is more than the pulpit, whose labor is requisite for this great undertaking. Some parts, at least, of the artistic interior of the house of God, might be permeated by a consecration to the production and manifestation and cultivation of juvenile piety. What church architect of modern time has any thought or provision for children in the house of God? The seating, as the service, is on the adult grade; and all within says, "This is for men and women." "It was a beautiful device of the late Prince Albert of England, to erect at Windsor Castle, for the benefit of his young children, a statue of Edward VI. pointing with his royal sceptre to this verse on the page of an open sculptured Bible: 'Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign;

[2] Brown's Life of Rufus Choate, p. 349.

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and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.'" [3] Why is not something of this kind as much in keeping with the house of worship, and as religiously useful, as complex arches, Ionic capitals, or those stained windows where some of the light of heaven, competing with gas, is indignantly red unto crimson in its struggle to get into the temple of the Most High? If our tens of thousands must go into the building of a sanctuary, why not some of it be made spiritually instructive to children, rather than all of it æsthetically gratifying to adults? No collegiate course should be run for seniors only. Why not in the building and furnishing and serving of the house of God, as in our family home, have a recognition of childhood in its different ages and interests and rights? Parents should not build and occupy the house of God on the fiction of bachelor and maiden life. As the human race is an elongated family, so the Church of the day is a section of it, and as such should be aptly housed, as well as cultivated.

But what is needed is an ecclesiastical training of the children of the Church in matters of faith and practice, corresponding to the civil training by the state in matters secular. The whole should come into a system commensurate with the divine obligations set forth in the constitution of the Church, and

[3] Christ's Infant Kingdom. By Rev. J. T. Tucker. Cong. Pub. Society, Boston, 1870. P. 23. A small treatise full of practical thoughts on this subject.

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with the vast issues involved in a proper religious culture of the rising generation. For it is evident that A BETTER HANDLING OF THIS WORLD LIES IN A BETTER HANDLING OF THE CHILDREN. Therefore the prevenient wisdom of God incorporated the Church as both a nursing and adult organization.

The fact has place and pertinence here, that those are the best systems of government, and produce the highest grades of civilization in all pertaining to the body, property, and liberty of the citizen, where the state takes best in hand the education of the children. On the other hand, where the children are left, like the young in the lower animal kingdom, to grow up uncultured and wild, there society comes nearest to the savage and brute condition.

The Church, as the embodiment of the divine kingdom in this world, is constituted and enjoined to do the very best thing religiously that the wisest civil government does secularly. Have commentators and Christians yet taken the full import of the phrases, "kingdom of God," "kingdom of Heaven"? Here is implied a government having a constitution, laws, and a progressive, annexing administration in this world. It has a divine head, with a management in stewardship, as under a proxy that is proconsular, legatine, or viceroyal. This divine lieutenancy is vested in the Church, and, indeed, is the Church. It must, therefore, begin where the best civil government begins; and, if it work wisely, it will spend a large part of its training force on childhood. It will be as wise and prompt and energetic, as the state is in securing worldly ends. For ecclesiastical

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fidelity and parental fidelity are the upper and lower hinges on which the Church-door swings.

In our day compulsory education is the crowning attainment of legislation in this line. The necessary education for the best citizenship is conceived and planned; the number and ages of the children are tabled; suitable teachers, buildings, text-books, and apparatus are made sure; and a tax for cost is levied on the property of the community. This common-school system is minute, complex, comprehensive, and expensive; and it has in it so much of power and utility and glory, that in places it comes nigh to being an idol. So the adult state educates the juvenile state to be its improved successor.

Something correspondent and commensurate should be the work of the Church. It may be said that this is done in our Sabbath-school system. Very true it is, that a vast amount of Christian work is accomplished by this organization, and but for it the spiritual privileges of the young would be deplorable. Yet it is to be considered, that, as a general thing, it is started, controlled, and held responsible outside of the Church. The system is a voluntary endeavor to do what the Church has failed to do. Originally it aimed to benefit the poor and neglected, who had no personal or family connection with the sanctuary. Here it found a legitimate and unoccupied province for religious labor. But when, starting outside, it assumed the main spiritual care of the children of the Church, it usurped a province; though it must be said, that the usurpation was welcomed by an indolent Church, and an alienation of office and work

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was allowed by the Church, that is totally unconstitutional so far as her own children are concerned. An irresponsible proxy service cannot thus meet an organic obligation.

The pleasant and honorable and profitable relations of the Sabbath schools to the Church are well illustrated by the private-school system as related to the state. The State of Massachusetts may well foster her Phillips and Bradford and Holyoke schools, and be as much honored as honoring in the act. But the duty of the Commonwealth to the masses of her children may not be thus delegated to private corporations.

The Sabbath-school system has grown up quite naturally around the unprelatical branch of the Church. In the extreme oscillation of the ecclesiastical pendulum from papacy through English episcopacy, it went over into bald individualism. Many a good rite and ceremony and system was left, because it stood connected with an ecclesiasticism justly offensive. The churchly culture of the children was abandoned with the old Church, and dropped into the family of the dissenter, and then it dropped farther into the Sabbath school. Some pleasing indications there are, that the pendulum inclines to a return.

A most serious objection lies against this delegation of a sacred trust to train her children, in the fact that the Church loses sight of them as her children. She no longer recognizes them as the baptized. The baptismal act is ignored in their education by proxy, and the seal of the covenant is covered and forgot-

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ten in the miscellany of the schoolroom; albeit the infant robes of the occasion may be carefully honored in their preservation as they were in their preparation and use. The school itself can make no distinction; and so it comes to pass, that, from the day of the baptism of the child, the act is fading away into forgetfulness. The baptized and the unbaptized, in the Church and out of it, are treated with an undiscriminating sameness. If this neglect, now so habitual, is to be regarded as normal, and the "beautiful ceremony" is to be the end of interest and responsibility, it becomes a difficult thing, not to say impossible, to show any divine authority, utility, or responsibility in the rite.

The question is frequently raised, Why is infant baptism so much neglected? The answer is easy, and in this connection pertinent, — Because baptized children are so much neglected. In the failure to keep up a recognition of them, or show any discriminating interest in them, the ceremony appears as a pleasant nullity. The three parties to the act, the parental, ecclesiastical, and divine, so far as afterwork is concerned, seem to be hypothetic. Their relations to the child, as baptized, do not show continuance; and their act appears to be one without practical consequences. Therefore the Christian of average practical sense neglects to keep up a cause that has no intended and elaborated effects. So far as the ceremony claims to be a covenant or contract, it seems to him like signing papers for the waste-basket, and he declines to sign.

It would be quite otherwise if the Protestant

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Church held the theory of the Papal and Greek, that baptism properly administered is invariably accompanied by spiritual regeneration, and is the procuring cause of it. But Protestantism holds to no such ceremonial salvation. Baptism with us is no *opus operatum*, an act of inherent, regenerating efficiency, a signature that pays a note instead of promising to pay. And it will be only simple justice to the Pædobaptist theory, and creditable to candor, that those rejecting it accept this emphatic declaration.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO FOR HER CHILDREN?

WHAT can be done by the Church in her offices, on a plan, specifically and continuously, for the children of the Church? Reserving the principal outline of labor to be unfolded in a separate chapter, the question may be answered now, subordinately, in three particulars.

1. The Church may provide that her leading servant bestow proportional labor on the children in his congregational services. In proportion to their number, the public exercises of the sanctuary should be made to come down into the range of their understanding and improvement. Indeed, for the highest benefit of all, it might be well for the preacher usually to strike for this. For the gospel is a system of religious truth for all, and its presentation should strike below, rather than above, the average multitude. That can be only a fractional gospel sermon, and therefore should be very occasional, whose scholastic and philosophic thought only a few can comprehend; and it is an abuse of the pulpit as a divine structure, to devote it, except on special occasions, to the latest, and therefore most dubious and abstruse, ethical ideas of the age. It is not its calling

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to keep abreast, in its ordinary and popular ministrations, of all philosophical and profound scholarship, even on questions related to natural and revealed religion. Rather should it keep the leading ideas of Paul and John and David and the Lord Jesus, side by side with the thronging and unlettered multitude. "The common people heard Him gladly." Christian scholarship has its place, and none more honorable, important, or exacting of labor; but it is not the pulpit. That is the platform for the populace, where men, women, and children may be taught how to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. Abstruse learning, even on practical themes, can find other and more serviceable methods of utterance. However much a teacher may know, he ought not to obtrude logarithms and the Mécanique Céleste into the common school. Ten years of monastic life, with books and professors, may well be suspected of a range of topics and discussions more learned than profitable; and the cultured few, and the society, as distinguished from the Church, are more likely to stimulate than to check and turn this drift of elevated thought. The New-England pulpit, especially, has taken a pride in its intellectual character, the religious and spiritual results of which are yet undeclared. The jury are out, and the verdict will not come in for a generation or two.

With this patronizing of sermons called "great," "able," and "magnificent," and with ministerial struggles, if not successes, in this line, the Church will see the need of claiming a proportionate labor of the pulpit for the young. As it is, probably not

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one sermon in ten is intelligible, and adapted to this half the congregation. The learned Peter is busy with his sheep, and finds slight arrangements or conveniences in the fold for the lambs.

2. The unseemly exclusion of the children from the congregation may be avoided. We have already noticed that the human reconstruction of the Church, in her creed, forms of admission, instruction, and general characteristics, indicates an organization for adults. Her Sabbath congregations are assuming more and more this character of childless assemblies. The children are largely absentees. The uncomfortable sittings for children, the expensive rentals, and the adult and scholarly exercises of the pulpit, explain their absence. A crowded, joyous, and well-administered Sabbath-school comes often in suggestive contrast with deserted pews, on the same day and under the same roof. Such facts are making the grade easier from two sermons a day to one; and possibly, by and by, the superintendents may be graduates of some preparatory school, and compete with the pastors for the larger congregation in their half of the day. If that time come, we may expect to see the worshipping congregation restored to its normal condition, as composed of men, women, and children.

3. There may be some public recognition of the divine classification of the children. Adult church-members are distinguished, and in various ways, from the rest of the congregation. Friendship for God, the utility of church-membership, and the benefits generally arising from church organization, require

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this distinction. Yet there is nothing correspondent concerning baptized children. With the exception of occasional memorial words on baptismal days, at the communion table, or preparatory service for it, their baptism fades from public recognition with the public view. In the medley of childhood life they are as other children; and very early it comes to pass, that only the church record and parental memories can tell who they are. Sometimes the record is a blank; and, in our brief pastorates, the shepherd who carried the lamb is often a man of to-day, —

"To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

The ignoring of a divine classification makes the ordinance as an act without a consequence, a mere semblance, that disappears with the shadow of the baptismal pageant as it goes down the aisle. Infant baptism must show its significance, and gain its offered advantages, by a care of the baptized separately and as such. For their condition is foreign to that of all other children, and calls for treatment on a divine method, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Something would be gained in this direction if the baptized children who are old enough to receive public instruction, and partake in public worship, should attend the preparatory lecture. As members of the church, and prospective communicants, the service could be adapted to them without detracting from its interest and usefulness for the adults. Thus a lively and constant impression would be made on

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them of their infant dedication and of the claims of Christ, while the expectation would be made more deep and serious, that they should soon be ready to show forth the Lord's death at his table.

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ANCIENT TREATMENT OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN.

EACH church, as each pastor for the time, would naturally have peculiar ways of doing this, as specially adapted to circumstances; but the thing will, for substance, be the same when done. It will be the moral, social, and religious culture of the baptized children as church-members.

The work of the early Church for her catechumens is the best illustration of what is here meant. Having been admitted to membership by baptism, the Church, within herself and by her appointed teachers, put them, with the unbaptized proselytes, under a system of training in the theory, doctrine, and practice of the Church, with reference to the full enjoyment of its privileges, and the assumption of its duties. Their scheme of education anticipated the time when the children should come into the place of the parents; and they therefore labored to bring them forward as far as human aid might "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And the very early impression made on those little ones was the instilled expectation of living a Christian life in the full privileges and duties of the Church. If the fathers erred in an excessive and

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vain ritualism in this line, we should not therefore reject a theory that was legitimate from the constitution of the Church, and which has eminently common-sense, as well as Scripture, for its basis.

This class of catechumens, made up of baptized children and adult candidates for a profession of religion, were instructed by themselves, and in private rooms in the Church. Such topics as repentance, forgiveness, a holy life, and the nature and use of baptism, led off in the instructions. An exposition of the creed followed, with an account of the origin and authority of the Scriptures, scriptural biographies and incidents. The teachings were rudimental, and the style simple, as adapted to children both in years and in grace. We have a good sample extant of their teachings in the twenty-three lectures of Cyril, bishop at Jerusalem, born there about A.D. 315. These were prepared for the catechumens; eighteen on the creed, and five on the ordinances of the Church.

Under this head in our discussion Bünsen has some very pertinent suggestions that we insert in summary.[1]

He would reform the baptismal sacrament in several particulars. The consecration it symbolizes he would consider progressive and incomplete till the baptized infant has come forward to a Christian life and adult years in the Church. The notion that baptism is needful to rescue the dying infant from future peril must be regarded as a superstition. The true idea of the ordinance must be received, "that the bap-

[1] HIPPOLYTUS, vol. iii. pp. 211-216. Longmans, London, 1852.

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tism of new-born children is the outward sign of the vow of the parents to dedicate their child to God, as his gift intrusted to them, and to prepare it by a Christian education for becoming a member of the Christian Church, until it be itself able to profess the faith in Christ." When the ceremony is performed, the duty of the parents, sponsors, and the Church, as sureties for a Christian education, should be made very prominent and imperative, due discrimination being had in the case of an adult.

As to the Sabbath services, instead of "disgusting them with it by making them listen to sermons they cannot understand, and which are in some respects totally unfitted for them, a school should be established for the younger ones, which, being short, and congenial to their feelings, might make an impression, and be beneficial to them."

He suggests four baptismal festivals for the year. "On each of these days, all children who have been born in the intermediate time will be baptized. The thanksgiving of mothers would most naturally form a part of such a congregational festival, and constitute a visible bond of sisterhood among the mothers, whatever might be their rank."

The baptismal day should be made "a congregational and church festival," marked and made conspicuous, both in honor of the rite, and for those benefits from it that only marked publicity can secure.

On one of these festivals the children of a certain age and aptness could be admitted to the catechetical school, with admonition and prayer and blessing; the

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impression being constant and deepening, that under this training, and as baptized children, they are expected to be, ere long, spiritually fitted for the communion of the Church.

The passage of the child from the merely ceremonial to the full Christian status in the Church, when with a spiritual delight it enters into the enjoyment of all its privileges, should be characterized by services as solemn and instructive as so important a step demands.

Taking the children to the catechetical school, and to certain services of the Church, must be regarded as necessary and ordinary duties in matter of course, a part of the life-work of the body of Christ.

But we cite the suggestions of Bünsen and the catechetical school of the ancients as merely illustrative, entitled only to so much regard as their historical and practical worth may ask of us. The necessities of the modern Church require a juvenile department; and be it ancient or modern in its model, or a wise compound of both, it should come in, and take a prominent and permanent place, as one of the working departments in the Church. She owes it to the Head of the Church and to the world, to develop and operate a system of religious training for her children, as universal and thorough and permanent, as the secular training that the state furnishes to its juvenile citizens. Meanwhile, the Sabbath-school should be put forward with all religious energy and honor, holding relations to the Church-school much like those that the congregation holds to the Church. Aside from the obvious divine obligation in the very

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organization to do this, there are other reasons neither few nor obscure.

1. The juvenile membership has a claim to their proportion of the interest and labors of the Church. As at present, the sermons and lectures and prayers and pastoral work are principally for those who have passed childhood. But the wants and rights of the younger ones, as members, should not be disregarded, and themselves thrust back. On a memorable occasion, the Saviour "was much displeased" at such a course; and his rebuke of it should never lose its power.

2. Their location, as divinely assigned, demands this especial attention. In the current of events, and in the economy of grace, God has given to these children this place within the enclosure of his visible kingdom, and for a purpose. It is the very centre of spiritual light and life and force. No other position is so full of hope for an unregenerate child, because God has centred his covenant promises there. It is a place full of encouragement and expectation, if the Church will fill it with adapted labor.

3. Their age invites to this separation and concentration of labor. In their tender years, they are as helpless and dependent for moral and religious truth as they are for food and clothing and housing, while their hearts are plastic and receptive, and their simple faith is almost without limit. A loving, friendly hand, studious of child-nature, can lead them where it will; and the Xavier who gives up slumber at any midnight hour to the calling little one may safely leave the proselyting of men to more ambi-

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tious teachers in the noonday crowd. These young hearts present a strange contrast with the coldness and hardness and cultivated scepticism of adult years, on which so much clerical labor is vainly expended.

4. These child-members are the Church in germ. They are what the nursery-rows are to the future fruit-orchard. If budded, they have passed under the divine and human hand of foreordination, and the fruits of the Spirit have already been gathered somewhat, and a full harvest is awaited with certainty. If unbudded, they unconsciously solicit and wait for a simple process that will forestall the very laborious, late, and often fatally delayed work of grafting old trees. Indeed, a State conference of Churches might do a more unprofitable thing than to hold one annual meeting in Rochester, N.Y., and spend one long recess in the vast nurseries there in the budding-season. For the Church of the future does lie potentially in her child-members; and we have been paying far too much attention relatively to old wild olive-trees.

A thoughtful, educating Christian cannot fail to see the immense importance of the point here made; and a working, praying Church will feel the need of the separated class in question. An opportunity is here offered that it is extremely unwise to lose, and, when lost, the damage is wide-reaching, as always when a divine plan is marred.

We have said that the Church will feel the need of this separated class. For this system of religious training should be ecclesiastical, and not pastoral merely, that it may have an inwrought and organic

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permanence in the Church, and so an independence of the changes and intermissions and moods in multiplex pastorates. In these unfortunately frequent ministerial changes, it is happening that the history of many a Church is made up of a series of prefaces, and of diagrams of hypothetic work. If in these changes only the records and the meeting-house, and possibly the creed, hold over, the spiritual forecasting for the community cannot be very hopeful. It is seedtime all the year round; and it comes to be said, "One soweth, and another" — sows.

A glance into an ancient catechumenium, or sacred schoolroom, will show the nature and aptness and power of the system proposed. The room is private for the time for this purpose. Baptized children, and candidates for baptism, young or old, if old enough to be instructed, compose the audience. The instructor corresponds to our Sabbath-school superintendent, or Bible-class teacher. Sometimes, however, he is what the ancient Church styled a deacon, presbyter, or even bishop. Possibly the class is special, being made up of rustic women and girls of low intelligence; when the teacher is a deaconess. The topics are the simplest in a course of sacred instruction, varying and progressive with the attainments of the class. Clemens Romanus, possibly contemporary with the apostles, in an apocryphal, though very early epistle, is represented as comparing the Church to a ship. In it, he says, the bishop is the pilot, the presbyters are the mariners, the deacons are the chief oarsmen, and the catechists are those who give information about the voyage, take fare, and admit

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passengers. So they prepare the catechumens to make the voyage of life successfully. Such a catechist was the great Origen at Alexandria, when only eighteen years of age.

Change now the time from the third to the nineteenth century, the room also to one of our beautiful chapels, and the pupils to our little ones of four years and upward, who, like Samuel and Josiah and John and Timothy, have been very early dedicated to God. Let such also be brought in, as Edwards speaks of in his "Narrative of Surprising Conversions:" —

"It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing, when any have seemed to be savingly wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now, I suppose, near thirty were to appearance so wrought upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of them about four years of age. . . . Yea, there are several numerous families, in which, I think, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so."

Let the room be made attractive and beautiful by whatever can interest and instruct a sacred childhood. The family room of Doddridge, as a boy, is suggestive. Dutch tiles, painted with Scripture scenes, ornamented the fireplace. Here it was Adam, Eve, and the serpent; there, cruel Cain, or the ark; there, Joseph in the pit, Elisha's bears, or the stern men ordering the children away from Jesus. Again and again the anxious mother told the stories, but specially that of the babe in the manger, to her

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sickly boy, "poor little Philip." Hence the man of God, and the Family Expositor.

The best talent in the Church for juvenile teaching should be drafted for the place. Hearts in sympathy with children, and with the Lord Jesus, will alone answer the demand. Borrow the best characteristics of the Sabbath-school most successful in winning children to the Saviour. Versatility in the exercises, an all-pervading cheerfulness, and a tender, loving piety, must be predominant, while the parental prayer and anxiety and expectation, that have crowned the best maternal associations, should pervade the room as an influence. As the parents think of their own Church relations, and are conscious of a separateness and an unlikeness from the rest of the congregation, these children should be made to think of their seclusion from others, and to have a growing expectation of the most sacred of Church privileges with their parents. The teachings will point significantly to this, while they outline the life of the child whom God loves.

It might be well to associate, with these, those children unbaptized, as well as adults, who give evidences of piety, and may therefore be considered as candidates for the Church. Such was usage in the early Church. They would then, with proper deliberation and a safety in examination, together with suitable preliminary instruction, be prepared for admission to the Church. Thus many of the hinderances, inconveniences, and evil results attending the present methods of admission, would be avoided.

The impetuous and ardent would in such a class-

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room find a sacred retreat for both reflection and instruction, and for the developing and enjoying of all the spiritual life they may have. By this prudent delay young converts would come under such supervision and obligation and expectations as their condition so naturally demands. Their denominational preferences would be insured, and their membership put in a reasonable anticipation; while, if not truly regenerate, they would be stayed from a premature profession of religion, and they and the Church be spared the common sorrow and mortification and damage of unworthy membership.

To such a class-room, also, the very opposite of the impetuous and ardent could be persuaded to come; those tender-hearted, timid, and doubting ones, evidently disciples, so many of whom are found lingering for years around the door of the Church. They would go to this class-room, and there probably they would gain knowledge and confidence and courage to go farther.

Perhaps the greatest gain, however, to be obtained from this school of the Church would be the discovery of Christians. It is a noteworthy fact, that frequently persons of adult years are found, who are living as good a Christian life comparatively as could be expected, when the general presumption is that they are not Christians. In a time of religious fervor and of conversions, they are supposed to become converts; and pastors and examining committees meet them among the candidates for membership. But they cannot tell when they gave their hearts to God, and began to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Allowing for the ordinary fluctuations in religious experience, they say that they have always felt as they now do. They cannot recall a time when they did not love God, and his people and Church and service.

What is the inference? That, in many cases of this kind, they became children of God back of any knowledge by the Church, and of any present personal remembrances of their own. Far back, when the cradle was nearer to them than an unmotherly church, God, by some of his simple processes in showing Jesus to a little child, brought them into his kingdom. Now, after ten, thirty, seventy years, the Church has just found it out! An unfortunate, uncherished, and therefore undeveloped Christian life, for all this period of gray dawn, like arctic days where sunrise is almost a failure! The fruits of the spirit uncultured and unharvested, because the field has been unrecognized and unfenced as a section of the holy land! Lambs here and there undiscovered in the rougher, wilder parts of the pasture, and no shepherd to "gather them with his arm, and carry them in his bosom!" How nigh unto perishing many of them must have come, worried of wild beasts, shot at and sorely grieved of the archers, and lying outside the long nights under windy storm and tempest! Possibly to save them from all this it is that the great Shepherd takes certain lambs into his upper fold, where they will be cared for.

Surely the mother Church should have discernment enough to recognize her children, even though quite young, and should be willing to give place and

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time for the discovery. The mother should be sensitive to the slightest infant warmth and pulse and breathing.

It may be that we have become unduly ambitious of the rough-and-tumble of those violent adult conversions that figure so prominently in some narratives of revivals, and in the one-sided biographies of persons rarely seen alive.

But, be all this as it may, the Church could have this class-room, where some of her officers, with the tenderness and earnestness and aptness of spiritual experts, could discover among the little ones the incipient germs of grace. Then, if some little Obadiah is preparing to say in later days, "I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth," the Church will be in a way to discover the pious boy betimes. As it is, many a Church is like Eli, when "his eyes began to wax dim," and he perceived not that God had shown grace and favor to the child, "till the Lord called Samuel again the third time."

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CHAPTER XL.

TO AND FOR AND ABOUT PARENTS. — CONCLUSION.

AT high water, on a crowning flat in Northern Minnesota, two canoes rest motionless. They wait for any slightest breeze or current or oar-stroke to give direction. A few negligent dips of the paddle may doom one to lie up a wrecked waif somewhere with Franklin, among the icebergs of the Arctic; while the other is wisely and kindly started southward, to drift under magnolia blossoms into the sunny gulf.

It is very well to say that every one must paddle his own canoe; but it is not too much to ask that parents take the laboring oar, when their children, in the opening voyage for life, may catch their destiny from the slightest influences.

> "From the same cradle's side,
> From the same mother's knee,
> One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
> One to the peaceful sea."

The words of Cyprian, already quoted, where he makes the ruined children plead in the Judgment Day, will often come back with an anxious memory: "We did nothing: we did not of our own accord forsake

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the bread and cup of the Lord for profane rites. The neglect of others ruined us. Our parents destroyed us: they deprived us of the Church as a mother."

The influences from the religious or unreligious surroundings of a child are often determining and foreclosing, while yet a slight over-influence would change the direction. Alexander, though conqueror of the known world, could never overcome certain defects of gait and manner that he had acquired from Leonidas, his teacher in childhood; while the Gracchi owed much of the beauty and force of their eloquence to the purity and grace of the language of their mother.

At the period of sacred dedication, and in the very early years of juvenile training, these delicate influences are predestinating. The canoe is taking its direction; the future conqueror is assuming gait and manner; and childish lips, in unconscious imitation of the mother-tongue, are framing the coming orations.

It is true many parents take but little interest in this ordinance of infant consecration in our Protestant churches. But the cause, reasons, necessities, and opportunities for interest are not well given to them. In the unprotestant churches, where so much is made of the ordinance, though unscripturally and unreasonably, there is no lack of interest, even to an anxious and painful extent. With us, parental hearts, regenerate and controlled by love for the Lord Jesus, would respond warmly and strongly to any religious endeavors of the Church in

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the welfare of their children. It is not in the heart of father or mother to faint or fail, when the combined people of God propose a spiritual favor for their child.

Let it only be known and seen that the arrangement of God proposes to place the children of believers in separation, as in a place of divine attention and covenant promise, and of religious labor and expectation of salvation above all others, and Christian parents will answer joyfully and energetically. This is precisely where the constitution of the Church of God would place the child of the covenanting believer. But the Church, failing to apprehend the intent of her organization in this regard, and keeping only the adult half of her covenant, slights her vast privilege, loses her opportunity, and so neglects to present this inducement and appeal and obligation to her parental members.

Let a Christian mother know that there are times and occasions and services when all the devout force of the Church is concentrated on the children of the Church, for their moral training, safe entertainment, religious instruction, and conversion, and the reasons and influences must be strong and persistent on her to keep her child from that group. Let her know, that, from the days of Abraham, it has been the habit of God, by promise, to give a discriminating and very tender interest to the children within that sacred circle, and her heart will yearn for the day when her loved one may be placed in it. Let her know that the leading men and women of the Church, down along the ages, "who through faith

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have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," and have made the dark pages of human history luminous with their biographies, have been almost totally those whom God has entered as infants in this training-school; and with what longing and expectation and prayer will she enter her child, and ask to have it enrolled on such a catalogue! Indeed, parents need only to have the divine inducements presented, and opportunities offered, and they will show an intense interest in this ordinance; for it has a divine adaptation to the parental heart that grace has warmed up with a spiritual tenderness and anxiety for one's offspring.

Parents are not only quick to recognize any auxiliary aid in the proper education of their children; but they readily discern the ease and power with which slight causes work great results, and small opportunities mature into immense advantages.

Some of our Western building-stone, when fresh from its native bed, can be cut and carved with the ease and grace of a soft marble or hardening stucco. But when the sun and the rain, the weather and the years, have lain on it, it takes to itself the resistance, and needs the chisel, of Quincy granite. Then when the architect would give it new forms, and ornament it with scrolls and metopes and legends and sculptured heads, he must expend a labor that ignores economy.

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Few men have exercised a power for the Church so wide and permanent as Origen; yet its foundations were laid in his childhood-home, and before he was seventeen. He was trained from the cradle in the Scriptures, and a family piety early took possession of him, while he daily memorized some portion of the word of God. So steadfast was his juvenile piety, that, when his father was about to suffer martyrdom, only the hiding of the lad's clothes by his mother kept him from sharing the violent death with him. Thus held back, he wrote to him, "Father, take heed; let not your care for us work a change in your purpose," — a noble testimony to parental fidelity, and the rich and early fruit of infant dedication.

Neander pays a beautiful yet simply just tribute to Christian mothers in their work for the Church: —

"By them the first seeds of Christianity were planted in the souls of those who afterward produced great effects as teachers of the Church. The pious Nona, by her prayers and the silent influence of the religion which shone through her life, gradually won over to the gospel her husband Gregory, who had belonged to an unchristian sect; and he became a devoted bishop. Their first-born son was carried, soon after his birth, to the altar of the Church, where they placed a volume of the Gospels in his hands, and dedicated him to the service of the Lord. The example of a pious education, and his early consecration, first received from his mother, of which he was often reminded, made a deep impression on the son; and he compares his mother with Hannah, who consecrated Samuel to God. This impression abode

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upon him, while exposed, during the years of his youth which he spent at Athens, to the contagion of the paganism which there prevailed." This son was afterwards the distinguished Christian and Church teacher, Gregory of Nazianzum.

"The pious Anthusa of Antioch retired from the bustle of the great world, to which she belonged by her condition, into the still retreat of domestic life. Having lost her husband at the age of twenty, from regard to his memory, and a desire to devote herself wholly to the education of her son, she chose to remain a widow; and it was owing in part to this early, pious, and careful education, that the boy became afterwards so well known as the great Church-teacher, John Chrysostom."

"A truly pious mother had seasonably scattered the seeds of Christianity in Augustine's heart while yet a child. The incipient germs of his spiritual life were unfolded in the unconscious piety of childhood. Whatever treasures of virtue and worth the life of faith, even of a soul not trained by scientific culture, can bestow, was set before him in the example of his pious mother. The period of childlike, unconscious piety was followed, in this case, by the period of self-disunion, inward strife, and conflict." The years were long and weary for the unbelieving, wayward son, and the praying, pleading Monica. In luxurious and profligate Carthage, in paganized Rome, and in Milan too, Augustine was a Manichean, a Platonic, and a New-Platonic, the proud, ambitious, unchristian philosopher. All this time, he says, his mother "wept for him more than a mother who is following

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her son to the tomb;" while her greatest human comfort came in the words of a good bishop: "It is not possible that the child of so many tears should perish." Meanwhile Augustine, held by the childhood lessons of the mother and by the convictions of his manhood, confesses that he was in "a continual torment and agitation of mind." Through all moral perils and wanderings, those early ties to a better way held him. Through long and terrible storms the ship dragged anchor, but never parted cable. Home influences, and parental prayers and teachings, prevailed, and Augustine was saved for eminence in the Church.

It was once our hap to spend a drizzly, foggy week-day in Quebec; and one stroll led to the cathedral. Its open doors to worshippers for all days and almost all hours beckoned us in. Solitary devotees came and went, — the banker, fresh from his desk of pounds and shillings, the hod-carrier, the washerwoman, and she who rustled in silks. Once within, they all seemed alike reverent and devout, and on an equality. Here and there, wide apart and lonely, they told their beads and pattered prayer, and departed. Up a side aisle, and almost stealthily, a man, poorly clad, led two little girls, the younger not more than three or four. They paused and knelt before a pictured crucifix; and with a woman's carefulness and tenderness the man placed the little ones in the attitude of worshippers, with folded hands and uplifted eyes. Evidently the wife and mother had gone before. Then their lips followed his in low articulation, and their eyes bent with his on the crucifix,

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and their fingers imitated his in crossing the little foreheads and bosoms. It was a slow, patient, absorbing service with them; and then they rose up and glided away. Our Protestant head shook somewhat, but the heart went out very reverently toward the man, and took hold of the children very tenderly. They were children of his and of the departed mother's covenant with God, and were to be brought up faithful and fast in the holy catholic Church. How wholly improbable that either girl so trained would ever swerve from the faith and ritual and spirit of the religion of their parents!

How slow Christian parents are to learn, that, in shaping character, their opportunity and power are nearest and next to the divine! And, because of this, God puts them under this covenant obligation to seize the opportunity and apply the power in training their children. Of course the moral destiny of the child does not lie totally in parental hands; but it lies there potentially more than in all others, save the divine.

It was in 1850, that a band of Iowa emigrants, bound for our new Ophir, entered the South Pass, that continental table-land where two brooklets, in a quandary, run different ways; one for the Atlantic, and the other for the Pacific. It is the land crest, or divide between the two great oceans. In a fancy as elevated as their position, they transferred a hunter's cup of water from each to the other stream, and then followed them in imagination and conversation in their exchanged destinies. With as little effort, and less reflection, many a child has had its destiny and

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current changed to the other side of the continent of life. Well will it be for the children, and so much better for mankind, when parents comprehend profoundly and anxiously the fact, that the moral tablelands and divides in this world are very near to where the cradle is rocked.

Because of this very fact, moreover, that the moulding forces of life lie so near to the cradle, the parent must never forget that they lie on a playground. The early period of all higher animal life is a period of physical enjoyment and amusement. Child-life is no exception to this; and the consecrated child needs to be amused, as well as instructed and trained. Safe social enjoyment must be provided in order to secure the best moral and religious results. The little games and sociables, and rambling recreations, are a great aid to religion in taking possession of a child.

Any pastor who has noticed how much a lamb frolics, just for the fun of it, must consider that the lambs of his flock, as belonging also to the animal kingdom, have like propensities, and quite as reasonable and as innocent. Indeed, they are constitutional necessities, and a wise provision should be made for them. The plays, as the prayers of a child, are worthy of careful parental attention; and a system of persistent negatives on juvenile indulgences will never furnish the recreations that childhood needs, and age can approbate. Great care is needed, therefore, lest one hinder a healthy moral and religious development. Juvenile piety, if well started and proportioned, will not hush the shouting of a boy, or

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slacken his running, or shorten his kite-
tle Samuel, even at Shiloh, must hav
childhood sports outside the tabernacle. ....
adult Samuel, as well as Hannah and Elkanah, passing for sedate and devout church-members, are pleased with a span, and lawn, and brilliant table-service, which are only the adult kite and top and oar. Possibly more fatherly and motherly attention, in the line of juvenile enjoyments, would have saved Hophni and Phinehas. With no unjust reflections on any Eli, ancient or modern, it might be suggested, that, if some good men would tremble more for the necessary and suitable recreations of their little ones, they would have less cause in old age to tremble for the ark of God.

But our discussion, expanded and itemized, comes to its conclusion. This examination of the stones of Zion has been full of interest, and we confess to its ending with regrets. Stones so laid of God, and in family strata, and on which the most of the beautiful and comfortable and hopeful in this world has been builded, and is to be, beget a study full of the deepest emotions.

Among these ancient foundations, we have found Abraham building in faith, and David in triumphant song, and Isaiah in glowing prophecy. We have walked about Zion with the Johns, harbinger and evangelist, and with the saints, Peter and Paul, and counted the towers thereof. Under the arches, and on the towers and goodly battlements, we have

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found Irenæus and Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine; and our own men of yesterday, Luther and Calvin and Edwards.

Indeed, we have been in a company of notables; for if we run over the catalogue of the world's worthies, starring the names that have given cheerful color and warmth to the pages of history, by the humanities and philanthropies and virtues of all higher life, we shall find that the foot-note to each star is, "This and that man was born in her."

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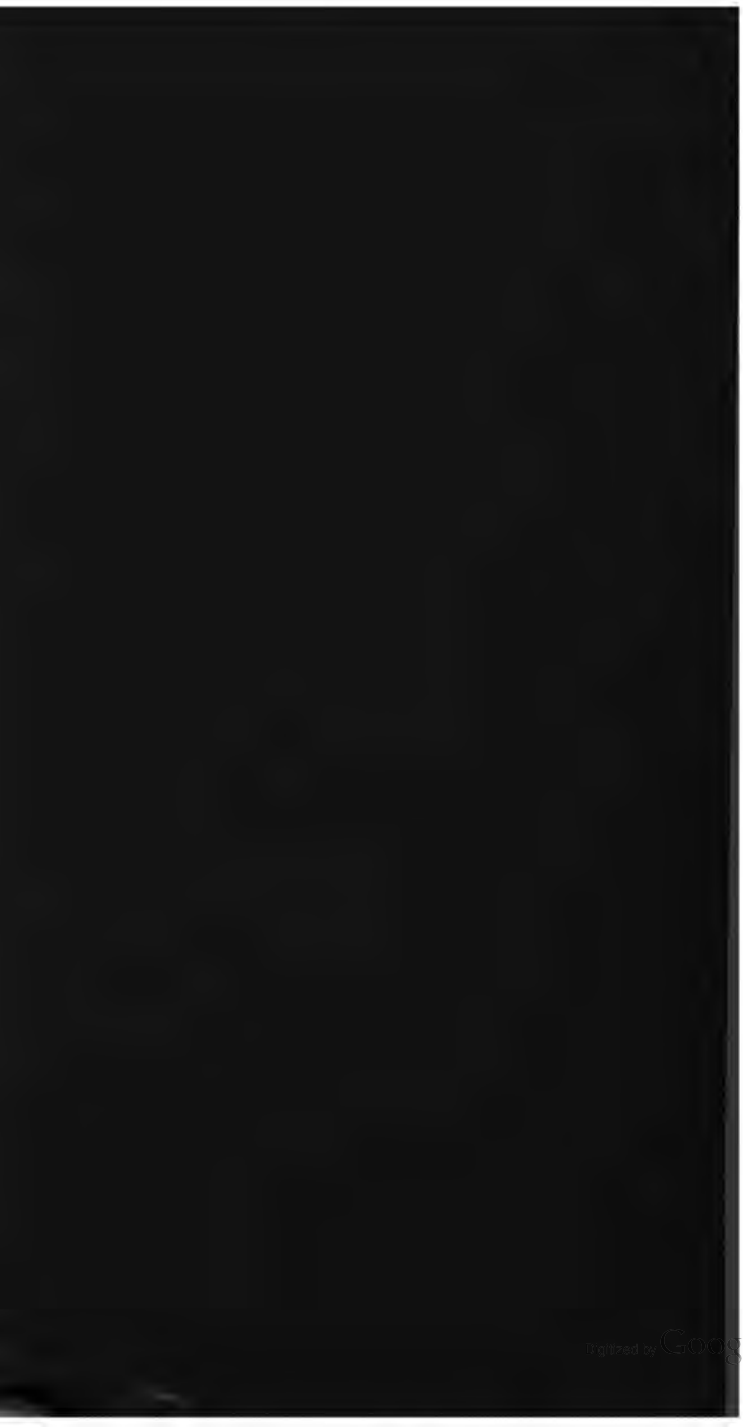
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